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" When they commit iniquity, they are personal breakers of the Covenant; therefore " they are personal Members: the former is proved, *Jer.* 11. 2, 10. *Ezek.* 16. 59.

Answ. The Covenant there spoken of is the moral Law, as the Text shewes, which any man never in, or cast out of the Church, may break, *Deut.* 27. 26. *Gal.* 3. 10. We are unwilling to enlarge these things, lest we should hinder other matters of weight, but we humbly suggest something to further consideration.

We shall conclude our Discourse about this Proposition with the words of the *Presbyterian* Ministers, in their Book entitled *A Petition for Peace*, wherein they lay down their judgement about the celebration if the Sacrament of Baptism.

" That a Minister should not baptize the Child of any that is unbaptized himself, or " of such as do not competently understand the Essentials of Christianity (what it is to be " a Christian) and the Essentials of Baptism, nor such as never since they were baptized " did personally own their Baptismal-Covenant by a credible profession of faith and obe- " dience received and approved. Had but this or the like been penned without other additions, we perswade our selves that the whole Synod would have consented to it without stick, which hath cost so many conflicts of tedious Dispute, it might be granted.

" Again, Baptism is an holy Sacrament instituted by Christ, in which a person pro- " fessing the Christian Faith (or the Infant of such) is baptized in water in the Name, " or in signification and solemnization of the holy Covenant, in which as a penitent Be- " liever (or the seed of such) he giveth up himself (or is by the Parent given up) to " God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to believe in, love, and fear the blessed Trinity a- " gainst the Flesh, the Devil and the World, and that especially on the account of Re- " demption; and is solemnly entred a visible Member of Christ, and his Church, a Child " of God, and an heir of Heaven. This those Reverend Ministers held forth before the Prelates, and it contains but the substance of what we have contended for, who are Dissentors.

Now followes the sixth Proposition.

Which being bottomed upon the fifth, expressed in the last Session, and not allowed by us, we must needs dissent from it.

The seventh Proposition is cautelously penned, and we need not largely to insist on it; only we think that all the care of the Churches and Members thereof must be, to look what Church they hold Communion with: See *Acts* 2. 40. *Ephes.* 5. 7, 11. 2 *Chron.* 6. 14, 15, 16. *Hag.* 2. 13, 14. *Rev.* 18. 4. *Psalm* 26. 5.

Now our good God which hath made hitherto Salvation for Walls and Bulwarks to us, and hath led his people like Sheep by the hands of *Moses* and *Aaron*, still make his people stedfast in one faith, and the order of the Gospel; and still call the name of our Courts, and Churches, and Families, *Jehovah Shammah*. Amen

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ANOTHER ESSAY
For Investigation of the Truth,
IN ANSWER
TO TWO
QUESTIONS,
Concerning { I. *THE SUBJECT of BAPTISM.*
II. *THE CONSOCIATION of CHURCHES.*

By *JOHN DAVENPORT* B. of D. and Pastor of the *Church* of *Christ* at *New-Haven*, in NEW-ENGLAND.

Matth.17.5. *This is my Beloved Son: hear him.*
2 Cor.13.8. *We can do nothing against the Truth; but for the Truth.*
1 Thess.5.21. *Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.*

Tertull. de Vel. Virg.

Veritati nemo præscribere potest; non spatium temporum, non Patrocinium Personarum, non Privilegium Regionum: ex his enim ferè Consuetudo initium, ab aliqua ignorantia vel simplicitate, sortita, in usum, per successionem, corroboratur, & ita adversus veritatem vindicatur. Sed Dominus noster Christus *Veritatem* se, non consuetudinem, Cognominavit. Si semper Christus & prior omnibus, æque veritas sempiterna & antiqua res est. Viderint ergo quibus novum est, quod sibi vetus est

Cypr. Cæcilio. Epistola.

Si solus Christus audiendus est; non debemus attendere quid aliquis ante nos faciendum putaverit, sed quid, qui ante omnes est, Christus Prior fecerit, & faciendum præceperit.

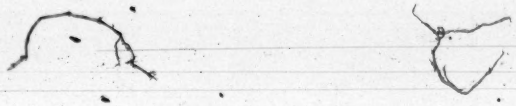
Item & cæteri in Concil. Carthag. Stephano.

Scimus quosdam quod semel imbiberint nolle deponere, nec propositum suum facile mutare, sed salvo inter Collegas pacis, & concordiæ vinculo, quædam propria quæ apud se semel sint usurpata, retinere. Quâ in re nec nos cuiquam facimus aut legem damus, cum habeat in Ecclesiæ administratione voluntatis suæ arbitrium liberum unusquisque præpositus rationem actus sui Domino redditurus.

Amicus *Socrates*, amicus *Plato*, magis amica *Veritas*.

Non eadem sentire bonos de rebus iisdem
Inclutum fecit semper amicitia

CAMBRIDGE:
Printed by *Samuel Green* and *Marmaduke Johnson*. 1663.



AN
APOLOGETICAL PREFACE TO THE
READER.

By Increase Mather who afterwards spoke [illegible]

IT was an Observation (or an Inspiration rather) of holy [a] Brightman's, That some faithful ones in a Wilderness should have the most clear Discoveries of the Abominations of the Man of Sin: *which Prophetick passage of that Reverend and Learned Writer, some have applied unto those worthy* Confessors *in* New-England, *who forsook their Country and Fathers houses, and left a pleasant Land, farre dearer to them then their lives, for the* Testimony of Jesus; *and upon no other account, but onely that so they might* see the Lord in his Sanctuary, and Worship him whom their Souls love, in the Beauties of Holiness; *where indeed they have seen him* walking in the midst of his golden Candlesticks. *So much the more sad it is to consider, that there should be any Declensions or Contentions amongst a People for whom the Lord hath done such wondrous things. We hope that none will be so injurious and unreasonable, as to impute it unto any defect in the Way (even* The good Old Congregational-Way) *of Government, which these Churches have hitherto Professed, that there should such Differences in judgement arise about things of a lesser moment. Do we not know, that even in the Churches planted by the Apostles themselves, there arose* no small dissention? *Acts* 15. 2. *Yea, that there was a* * Paroxysm *between a* Paul *and a* Barnabas? *Let* Rome *glory in her Peace against all* Reformed Churches, *shall we therefore think that* all our Foundations are out of course? *True it is, our hearts cannot but mourn and bleed, that ever it should be* told in Gath, *or* published in the streets of Askelon, *that there are any different Apprehensions amongst us: And in that respect we could gladly have forborn the Publication of the ensuing* Essay. *Yet, when we remember, that* [b] Variety of Judgements may stand with Unity of Affections, *and that Disputation is the way to finde out Truth*, Ex collisione ingeniorum

[a] Clariorem ad Cyprianum hac lucem solitudo dabit, &c. Bright. in Apoc. 17. 3.

* ἐγένετο παροξυσμὸς Act. 15. 39.

[b] Opinionum varietas & opinantium unitas, non sunt ἀσύστατα.

fit scintilla veritatis; *and, that* [d] He that judgeth a Cause before he hath heard both parties speaking, although he should judge rightly, is not a righteous Judge, *We are willing that the World should see what is here presented. But especially, being perswaded that* the Honour of God, and of his Truth, *require this as a duty at our hands, We durst not hinder what is here maintained from coming into light, lest we should one day have it laid unto our Charge, that* we did withhold the Truth in unrighteousness. *And, in very deed, our Opinion of what is here by the Reverend Author asserted, is such, as that we do believe it will tend to our* rejoycing in the day of the Lord Jesus, *that ever we were made instrumental to bring the Truth into publick view, whereby the World might fare the better for it. We are to* follow Peace, *but not with the* loss of Truth: *But when* Truth *may be discovered without any hazard unto* Peace, *and* oneness of Affection, (*as we hope the case is so in the publication of this Elaborate* Essay) *we should be very injurious indeed, if we did not what in us lay to forward it. Moreover, what is here held forth, ought to be regarded upon more accounts then one.* Salvian *his Observation is too often found true, that* Men in reading Books look more at [e] *Quis*, then *Quid scripsit*; who hath written, then what he hath written. *If we respect either of these, the following Discourse may be commended to the Reader:* The Author is a Commendation of the thing Written; and the thing Written is a Commendation of the Author. *As for the Author*, His praise is in the Gospel throughout all the Churches; *and indeed*, His Works praise him in the Gates. *Well did Mr.* Cotton *give this Testimony concerning him, that* He is a [f] Man mighty in Judgement, and Learning, and Singular Prudence. *And we doubt not but those that love and honour him farre less then we do, yet will say, that* He is one of a thousand. *It is indeed* an evil under the Sun, to have men's persons in admiration, *so as to take any man's* αὐτὸς ἔφη *for a demonstration: yet there are some Writings which are the more to be respected, because of the Writer.* Logicians *know, that* Testimonies are to be more or less valued, according to the person Testifying. *And truly, if there be any man amongst us, whose words deserve regarding for his sake that speaks them, then so do the words of this Judicious, Learned, and Holy man. Furthermore, if we consider* the Thing written, *it calls for due respect*

and

d *Qui statuit aliquid parte inauditâ alterâ, æquum licet statuerit, judex haud æquus fuerit.* Sen. Trag.

e *Salvian. de Averit. l. 1.*

f *Davenportus, Judicio, eruditione, & singulari Prudentiâ pollet.* Cotton. Præfat. Apol. ad Norton. Resp. Apollon.

and reverence. As that for-ever famous Dr. [g] Ames *said of the most Scholastically-Learned Dr.* Twisse, *so may we much more say, that* We are not amongst the number of those who can adde any thing by our Testimony, unto the esteem of what is here maintained. *Nevertheless, having diligently perused this* Essay, *we hold it our duty to declare unto the World,* That we fully concurre (as to the Summe and Substance thereof) with what is here maintained and managed with great Wisdome and Piety, and irrefragable Strength and Solidity. *We shall say no more to Apologize for our Publishing of this* Reply: *But having this opportunity of speaking unto the World, we deem it meet to adde something, in the behalf of those who went under the Notion of* Dissenting Brethren, *in the late* Synod held at Boston. *We perceive, that there are many things Objected against them; and therefore, that so their Cause may not thereby be prejudiced, it is needful that something should be said for the removal thereof.*

g Ames. ad Lect. in Twiss. vindic. contra Armin.

First, it is Objected, That there were but a few in comparison, who Dissented from the major part of the Assembly.

Answ. *Suppose it were so; Is* Truth bound up to Number? *It was, indeed, a sore Temptation to* Luther, *when it was Objected to him,* Tune solus sapis? *Is there never a wise man in the world but you? It may be the same thing hath been as great a Temptation to some of us. In the* Council of Constance, *one of the Prelates said unto that blessed Martyr* John Husse, [h] That he should never shew himself so Arrogant, as to preferre his own Opinion above the Judgement of the whole Council. *Yet the whole Council (though it were an Universal Council) erred, and this one good man held the Truth against so many. Which we do not mention, as though we would prefer our own Judgements above others; such a thought we abhor. Neither is it in our intentions, any wayes to reflect upon those Honoured and Reverend Persons from whom we* Dissented; *nay, we look upon them as far better then our selves: onely by this Instance given, we may see, that in a Council (nay, an* Oecomenical Council) *a few (nay* one) *may dissent from all the rest, and yet neither* Ignorance *nor* Arrogance (*but* Truth *and* Conscience) *be the ground of it. In the* Nicen Council *there was but one* [i] Paphnutius, *who opposed all the rest of the* Synod, *that had concluded upon a gross Error.*

h Histor. John Husse, fol. 25.

i Sozom. l. 1. c. 23. Magdeb. cent. 4. l. 7. pag. 486.

And if we look into our own Nation, there were but Five [k] Diſſenting Brethren *who maintained the Truth* (*as we cannot but be perſwaded*) *about* Church-Government, *againſt* Seventy *perſons, who were alſo worthy of Reſpect and Honour. Now though our* Aſſembly *was not ſo Numerous as that, yet there were more then* Five twice told, *who could not ſee ſufficient Reaſon to apprehend as others did. And that we are not ſingular in our apprehenſions about theſe matters of* Controverſie *now in agitation, appears from theſe following Witneſſes. Bleſſed Mr.* Cotton *hath theſe very words:* [l] Infants cannot claim right to Baptiſm, but in the right of one of their Parents or both: where neither of the Parents cannot claim right to the Lords Supper, there their Infants cannot claim right to Baptiſm. *That Learned man, and Renowned Sufferer for Chriſt under thoſe* Bloody Fathers (*as they would needs be ſtyled*) the Prelates, *even Mr.* Burton, *writes after this manner:* [m] It is not now under the Goſpel, as it was from *Abraham* unto Chriſt. The Covenant was made with *Abraham* and his ſeed, ſo as by *virtue hereof* all the Male-infants of believing *Abraham* were and ought to be Circumciſed: But now, under the Goſpel, thoſe onely are accounted *Abrahams* ſeed, who profeſs the Faith of *Abraham*; ſo as that the Covenant is Entailed onely to Believers now, and ſo to their children, *Acts* 2.39. If then the Parents refuſe Chriſt, they cut themſelves off from the Covenant, and therewith cut off their children. *And Mr.* Beverly (*a late ingenious Writer*) *ſpeaking the judgement of the* Congregational-men *in* England, *as farre as he had knowledge thereof, hath ſuch paſſages as theſe:* [n] Let me beſeech my Presbyterian Brethren to conſider, what ſad advantage you give to bold Intrenchments upon the Lords Supper, by your too looſe Adminiſtring Baptiſm; me-thinks you do but contradict your ſelves, when you ſuſpend from one Ordinance Signal, and yet allow the other Ordinance of Baptiſm, which is as Signal, *&c. Nor was there ever any ſuch inlargement of Baptiſm, as is here pleaded for, practiſed in any* gathered Churches *in* England, *that ever we knew, or could hear of.*

Secondly, it is Objected, That we deny all Church-membership unto Infants, which is a Principle of Anabaptiſm.

Anſw. *Mr.* Rutherfurd *in his* Reply *to Mr.* Hooker, *chargeth him*

k Mr. Tho: Goodwyn, Mr. Nye, Mr Simpſon, Mr Burroughs, Mr. Bridge.

l Mr. Cotton's Way of the Churches meaſured by the Golden Reed of the Sanctuary, pag. 81.

m Burton vindic. of Independent Churches, p. 62.

n Beverly againſt Tombes, p. 173, 174.

him with Principles of Anabaptism; *yet Mr.* Hooker *was never guilty of any such Opinions. So are we charged with* laying Cornerstones of Anabaptism; *but this is injuriously laid unto our charge: Yet let us not for fear of* Anabaptism, *do worse, even* Defile our selves with Antichristianism. *We are willing to profess, that we look upon it* as great a sin to baptize all Children, *(for that is no less then* [o] a violating of God, *as* Jerome *speaks)* as to baptize no Children; *though both Opinions, we think, are sinful. Neither can we plead* Guilty *unto that Charge,* That we deny all Church-membership unto any Infants; *we onely deny* that they are personal and immediate Members. *Indeed, as* personal Membership *is taken* subjectively, *so we say it is in Infants,* i.e. *their persons are* Recipients *of the* Adjunct *of Church-membership: But as* personal Membership *is taken* formally, i.e. *for such as have by themselves in their own persons entred into Covenant with God and his People, so Infants are not capable of* personal Church-membership. *It's strange to us to conceive, that they should have this* personal formal Membership, *and yet that they should not be subjects capable of* formal personal Censures. *We neither do, nor ever did deny,* That the persons of Infants of Believing Confederate Parents are brought under the Covenant; *onely we conceive, that* their Membership is [p] Conjunct with, and Dependent upon the Membership and Covenant of their Parents, so as to live and die therewith. *Hence Mr.* Cotton *hath these words;* [q] The Membership of Children (I mean Infants) is founded in the Faith and Profession of their Parents. *Hence the Childes Membership may continue after the Parents decease, because his Parents Faith and Covenant may live, though himself be dead; as 'tis said,* Abel being dead, yet speaketh. *So the Covenant, and Faith, and Prayers of a godly man, who is dead, yet live. Hence also, when the Parents are* Excommunicated, *the Membership of the Infant-childe is* cut off, *because* Excommunication *puts an end to the* Outward Covenant, *(which* Death it self *doth not do;) and if the* Root *be destroyed, the* Branches *cannot live. True it is, that we have made much use of that distinction of* Immediate, *and* Mediate Members, *which seems, to us, to carry a mighty and constraining Evidence of Scripture-light along with it, yea, and so as to solve (if rightly understood and managed) the strongest*

Objections

o *Dum Sacramenta violantur, ipse cujus sunt violatur.* Hieron. in Mal. 1.

p See the first *Essay* of this Reverend Author in Manuscript.

q Mr. Cotton, *Holiness of Church-members*, p. 63.

Objections that are brought against the Cause *and* Truth *we plead for. And let it be considered, that* Church-members *have been commonly distinguished into* Compleat, *and* Incompleat: *And* Authors *who have been* Stars of the first Magnitude, *if ever there have been such upon Earth, have made use thereof. We might instance in that* Incomparable Champion for the Truth, *and for the* Non-Conformists, *against* Prelacy, *Mr.* Robert [r] Parker: *so likewise* [s] Ames, Voetius, [t] Hornbeck, *Dr.* [u] Winter, *Mr.* [w] Hanmer, *&c. make use of the same distinction: and the* Dissenters *have proved it in their* Antisynodalia.

r Parker de Pol. Eccles.
s Ames. Med. Theol. l. 1. c. 32. Th. 13.
t Hornbeck Epist. ad Duræum, p. 356.
u Dr. Winter on Act. c. 38. p. 95.
w Mr. Hanmer, Exercit. about Confirmation in Postscr. Second Edit.

Thirdly, it is Objected against us, That we maintain a strange Opinion, namely, That a person who is a Church-member, may become no Member, by an act (or a defect rather, which may be called an act, as Sins of Omission are termed Actual Sins) of his own, without any Church-act in Censuring of him.

Answ. *Most true it is, that we do* Maintain *this, and must do so, till we see the contrary proved. Neither do we know that this* Opinion *contains any thing in it dissentany from Scripture or good Reason: Nor see we how some* Arguments *for the Affirmative can fairly be answered. Suppose we an* English Fugitive *that is become a* Priest *in* Antwerp, *or a* Cardinal *at* Rome: *Or suppose we a* Turk *who is an* English-man *by Birth; this* Turk *was baptized a* Member *of some* Parish-Church (*which those that we dispute against maintain to be* true Churches, *and we are farre from denying of it universally) and he was never* Censured *by any* Church *for his* Apostacy: *now we demand,* Whether this Turk be a Member of the Church of Christ yea or no? *To affirm it, would be gross; To say that* Turks are Members of the Church of Christ, *is in truth to speak* Daggers. *When the* Arch-Flamin Whitgift *said, that* Papists and Atheists might still remain Members of the visible Church: *Mr.* Parker [x] *tells him,* That even a *Vorstius* would condemn him. *And it is no new Doctrine in the Schools, to say, that* [y] An Heretical Apostate is no more a Member of the Church of Christ, then a Wound, a Sore, or a Brand, is a member of a man; *which none can imagine. The truth of this none can doubt of, that is* mediocriter doctus *in Scholastical Divinity. Therefore we conclude, that* Church-members may become no Members by their own defection.

x De Pol. Eccles. l. 2. c. 16.
y Morton Apol. Catho. par. 1. l. 1. c. 3.

And

And we humbly conceive (though with ſubmiſſion, as is fit, to better judgements) That thus much is held forth by theſe Scriptures, Hebr. 10. 25. 1 Joh. 2 19. Jude *ver.* 19. *Again, how came* Eſau *to loſe his* Membership? *We reade not that he was* Excommunicate: *Therefore it remains, that he* diſ-Covenanted, *and ſo* diſ-Membered *himſelf. And how came the Children of* Abraham *by* Keturah *to loſe their* Membership? *it was not by* Cenſure. *In like ſort, when perſons* under the Goſpel, *do not come up to the* terms of the Covenant, *to ſhew themſelves to be* Abrahams *Children, by holding forth* his Faith, *and* walking before the Lord in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, *we ſuppoſe that they are juſtly deemed* Breakers of the Covenant, *and have juſtly put themſelves* out of that Covenant which their Parents *(becauſe of their then perſonal incapacity to act for themſelves)* made for them. *Alas! that any ſhould look upon us as* Maintaining dangerous Opinions, *becauſe of this! Wherefore, that all may know, that there is neither* Danger *nor* Singularity *in this our Aſſertion,* That a Church-member may poſſibly become no Member, without any act of the Church in formal Cenſuring of him, *give us leave to produce ſome* Teſtimonies *to prove it. Judicious and bleſſed Dr.* Ames [z] *ſaith,* That in caſe of pertinacious Separation, ſuch perſons, though they may be of the inviſible, yet they are not to be accounted Members of the viſible Church: *Which words of the Learned Doctors do make the more for our purpoſe, for that they are Cited and Approved of by* The [a] Anſwer to the XXXII. Queſtions. *Our* Congregational [b] Brethren *in* England, *do with one voyce ſay,* That ſome Church-members may be *felones de ſe,* ſuch as may deſtroy their own Membership. *Yea, and this was once ſound Doctrine in* New-England. *Bleſſed Mr.* Cotton *(whoſe Name is and will be precious, ſo long as the Earth ſhall endure) maintains it for a Truth,* That [c] many in Churches have cut themſelves off. *Another* Teſtimony *which we would produce, is* [d] *their* Diſcourſe of the Church-Covenant, *(of which the Reverend Mr.* [d] Richard Mather *was the ſole Author) and the words are theſe following:* [e] That if men had not promiſed, and alſo performed in ſome meaſure of truth, the duties of Faith and Obedience unto God, they had not taken hold of the Covenant, but had *DISCOVENANTED*

[z] *Caſ. Conſ. l. 5. c. 32. in Reſp. ad Quæſt. 4. Th. 8.*

[a] Anſw. to queſt. 4. p. 17.

[b] Preface to the Declaration of Faith & Order, *at the Savoy.*

[c] Way of Churches, p. 9.

[d] See Preface to the Anſwer to 21 Queſtions.

[e] Diſcourſe of Church-Covenant, *Printed An.* 1639. p. 17.

THEMSELVES, notwithstanding all the Promises of God unto their Fathers or others. Thus though God promised *Abraham* to be a God unto him and his seed, in their generations, *Gen.* 17. 7. yet the *Ishmaelites* and *Edomites* descending from *Abraham*, were discovenanted, by not promising nor performing those duties of Faith and Obedience, which God required on the peoples part. *And the same* Truth *is held forth by the same* Author, *in* The Answer to the XXXII. Questions *before-mentioned. This is the main thing wherein we* Dissent *from the* major part of the Synod. *Now, if this were* Truth *in the Year* 1639. *(as it then had the* Approbation *of the* Elders *hereabouts) we see no reason why it should not be* Truth *in the Year* 1662. *For,* Veritas in omnem partem sui semper eadem est. *Either this was a* Mistake *then, or else it is a* Truth *at this day. Here let us adde the words of Mr.* Cotton, *in his Excellent Treatise of* The Holiness of Church-members, *which are these following:* [f] Such as are Born and Baptized Members of the Church, are not orderly Continued and Confirmed Members, unless when they grow up to years, they do, before the Lord and his People, profess their Repentance and Faith in Jesus Christ. *To say no more of this; Renowned* Parker, *speaking of the Interpretation of those words* [Laying on of Hands] *in* Heb. 6. 2. *cites many judicious Writers, whose judgements he expresseth, in words to this purpose:* [g] That they who were baptized in their minority, when they are grown up, after that the Church had approved their Faith by the Symbol of Imposition of Hands, they were admitted Members of the Church. This was according to sound Doctrine in the Primitive times (*as* Parker *saith.*) *Now we demand, How they can be admitted as Members, who are already as compleat and perfect Members as any in the Church? But the ancient Doctrine was,* ([h] Antiquissimum uerissimum) That Children who were baptized in their minority, after they shall come to profess their Faith, so as to be accepted of the Church, may be admitted as Members. *Therefore, according to the ancient Doctrine,* Such children are not as compleat and perfect Members as any in the Church. *Yea, therefore it follows, That when they are* Adult, *in case they do not, by holding forth Faith and Repentance, joyn unto the*

f Mr Cotton, Holiness of Church-members, p. 19. v. 41.

g Parker. de Pol. Eccles. in cap. de Unione Ecclesiæ Visibilis, Sect. 9. v. 13.

Id verum quod cunq; primum et adulterum quodcunq; posterius

h Tertullian. Apologeticum.

the Church, that then they do not retain their Membership which they had in minority.

Fourthly, it hath been Objected, That we will not suffer Children to come under the Watch and Care of the Church.

Answ. *We are so farre from being of that* Opinion, *as that we verily fear there is great guilt lies upon the* Churches, *because they have neglected their duty towards the* Children in question. *It is as clear to us as* the Light at Noon, *or (to use* Tertullians *phrase)* as if it were written with the Beams of the Sun, *That a special Care (even* Church-care) *and Inspection is due, over those* Children that are Born within the Gates of Zion. *Happy might it be for us all, if the issue of these troublesome* Controversies *might be onely to* awaken Churches to stricter Watch and Diligence, in Overseeing those Children that are in minority: *Onely we conceive, that the* Watch over them is to be Mediate, *according to the state of their* Membership. *The Church is to see that the* Parents *do their duty toward their Children, in* bringing them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. [i] And if when they shall be adult, they do not bring forth fruits of Repentance and Faith, then (as the Fig-tree which did not bear fruit, was to be cut down) the Church is to disown them, as *having no part in the Lord,* and to declare, that they by their unbelief have Discovenanted themselves. *But we see not sufficient warrant from the* Word of God, *to proceed to a* formal Excommunication *of the* Children in question, *because that is applicable unto none but those who have been in* full Communion. *Now if this be all that is striven after,* That Church-children might be brought under Church-watch, *why should the* Contentions of Brethren be like the bars of a Castle, that cannot yield?

[i] Luke 13.7. Acts 5.21. See Mr. Davenports and Mr. Hookes Catechism.

Lastly, it hath been Objected, That the reason of our Dissenting from the major part of the Synod, was Weakness and Ignorance, and meer Wilfulness, in that we could bring no Arguments, but what were sufficiently refuted.

Answ. *The very same thing hath been said of those Worthy Champions, who stood up for* the Congregational-Way, *in opposition to the Assembly at* Westminster, *that* [k] Their Arguments were weak and ridiculous, and had been Confuted, and sufficiently answered;

[k] See these words in *The Antidote against Independency* by T. I. P. p. 21, 22.

anſwered, and that themſelves were Self-conceited, and Obſtinate. *But theſe* Criminations *were unworthy* Calumniations. *It was a common Reproach caſt upon the Chriſtians of old,* That they were all weak and unlearned men: *which made* Jerome *write that Book* De viris Illuſtribus. *So* Stapleton *makes no bones to call* Whitaker, An Aſſe, *and* A Fool. *And the ſame* hiſſing of the Serpent *have we ſeen in the* Prelates *againſt the Renowned* Non-Conformiſts. *But, we ſuppoſe, their ſaying ſo, did not prove it was ſo. Nevertheleſs, we are content to accept of the* Charge, *when we are charged with* Weakneſs and Folly: *Let us* be fools for Chriſts ſake, *or* for his Truth; *Let us* fall, *ſo the* Truth may riſe; *let us* ſit in the duſt, *ſo that* Truth may ſit in the Throne. *We deſerve not to be otherwiſe eſteemed, then as* Weakneſs and Ignorance it ſelf: *Yet let us not be reputed* Obſtinate, *and ſuch as are and will be blinde, becauſe we dare not* betray the Truth, and ſin againſt our Conſciences. *For, our* weightieſt Reaſons *never were* Anſwered *unto any tolerable ſatisfaction, even to this day. If it be demanded here,* What our Reaſons were, why we accorded not with the major part of the Synod? *We ſhall by the help of Chriſt, and in the fear of God, declare what our chief* Reaſons *were, which cauſed our* Diſſent; *which when they are* Anſwered, *we ſhall lay down our* Opinion, *as knowing that it is* Nullus pudor ad meliora tranſire.

1. The Synod did acknowledge, That there ought to be true ſaving Faith in the Parent, according to the judgement of rational charity, or elſe the childe ought not to be baptized. *We intreated, and urged again & again,* that this, *which they themſelves acknowledged was a Principle of Truth,* might be ſet down for a Concluſion, and then we ſhould all agree. *But thoſe* Reverend Perſons *againſt whom we placidly diſputed, would not conſent to this, though* our Unity lay at the Stake for it.

2. We have not Warrant in all the Scripture, to apply the Seal of Baptiſm unto thoſe Children, whoſe Parents are in a ſtate of unfitneſs for the Lords Supper. *Thoſe,* Acts 2. 41. who were Baptized, continued breaking Bread *alſo*, ver. 42. *'Tis granted, That thoſe Children were Circumciſed amongſt the Jews, whoſe Parents were for a time debarred from the Paſſeover,*

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but that was onely upon accident of Ceremonial Uncleanness, *which alters not the case; for,* Unless the father were in a state of fitness for the Passeover, he was not fit to have his childe circumcised. *The like may be said concerning the* Gospel-Passeover, *and the* Gospel-Circumcision. *Neither do we reade, that in the Primitive times* Baptism *was of a greater latitude, as to the* Subject *thereof, then the* Lords Supper: *but the contrary. The* [l] Catechumeni *were not to be Baptized, before they were fit for the* Lords Supper. *And thence, when through the darkness of the times, the* Lords Supper *was not administred except at* Easter, *(as 'tis called) the* [m] Baptism of the Catechumeni *was deferred until then also. In the* Dawnings of Reformation *in* England, *our* Juell *could plead against* Harding, *that* [n] Baptism was as much to be reverenced, as the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. *Nay, in former Ages, some Churches have been so far from extending Baptism, further then the Lords Supper, as that they have committed a grievous Errour, in administring the Lords Supper unto* Infants. *So it hath been in the Churches of* [o] Bohemia, *and in* [p] Russia: *And this was maintained by* Austin, *and* Innocentius, *and* [q] *all the Churches in their time. Which* Testimonies *we produce, to shew, that former Ages have been farre from looking upon the* Lords Supper, *as being of a more sacred nature then the other Ordinance of* Baptism. *Indeed of late there have been those who have made* Baptism *of a far larger extent then the* Lords Supper. *This hath been one* practical Difference *between* Congregational-men *and* Presbyterians *(whom the Lord unite in the Truth) in that the* Congregational-men *would baptize the Children of none but such, whose Parents were fit for the* Lords Supper: *when-as the* Presbyterians *would Baptize the Children of such, whose Parents were not fit for the* Lords Supper; *and their promiscuous Administration of that* Ordinance, *was very grievous unto their* Congregational Brethren. *See* Beverly *against* Timson.

l Catechumeni ad Baptisterium nunquam admittendi sunt. Concil. Arauf. c. 19.

m Concil. Germ. dist. 4. [illegible] p. 222.

n Juels Reply to Harding. p. 553.

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q See Fulk. Annot. on Job 3. 5.

3. The Parents of the children in question, are not Members of any instituted Church, according to Gospel-Rules, because they were never under any explicite and personal Covenant. *To prove which, we reason thus: If this* second Generation *do retain their Membership by virtue of their Parents Covenant made for them in minority; then, in case all the* pro-Parents *were dead, this* second

Generation *would be a* true Church of Christ, *without any further Act or Covenanting. But this* second Generation *are not a* true Church of Christ *without some further Act.* Ergo, *they do not retain their Membership. If they are a* true Church of Christ, *then they have Power to Vote in* Church-affairs, *as to chuse Officers, and to cast out Offenders, and the like; because every* true Church *hath this power given to them by the Lord Jesus, who is the only* Head of his Church. *But* they have no such Power (*say the Synod, who do expressly* [r] *exclude the persons in question from the Lords Supper and Voting.*) *Therefore we conclude that they are no* true Church of Christ. *Therefore the persons in question do not retain their Membership; therefore their children ought not to be Baptized.*

[r] See the *Answ. to 21 Questions.* And the *Synods Propos.*

4. It is not Meer Membership, (*as the Synod speaks*) but qualified Membership that gives right unto Baptism. *For the evincing whereof, we argue thus:* John's Baptism *was* Christian Baptism. (*as all our Divines maintain against the Papists*) John's Baptism *might not be applied unto some, who were standing Members of the visible Church, because they were not qualified with* Repentance, Luke 3.8. & 7.30. *Therefore* Christian Baptism *is not to be applied unto such as stand Members in the visible Church, if they be not qualified with* fruits of Repentance. *This seems to us to cut the Sinews of the strongest* Arguments *which are brought by the* Synod *for the* Enlargement of Baptism: *for, their strongest* Argument, *is* the Membership of the Children *in Controversie; whereas it seems to us, that the Scripture doth not acknowledge any such* Meer Membership *as they speak of. And besides that, the case is clear in our apprehension, from the Instance given, That 'tis not* Meer Membership, *but* qualified Membership, *that gives right unto this Divine and Sacred Ordinance.*

5. That which will not make a man capable of receiving Baptism himself, in case he were unbaptized, doth not make him capable of transmitting right of Baptism unto his childe. *It is a Ruled case,* [s] That he that hath not Title himself unto any Priviledge, cannot entitle another. *The Lawyer saith,* Acts [*non habente potestatem*] are invalid. *But all that the Synod can said, will not give a man right to Baptism himself, in case he were un-*

[s] Mr. Hooker, Survey, part. 3. p. 17.

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baptized; for a man may be an unbeliever, and yet come up to all that the Synod hath said in their fifth Proposition, *and more too.* Ergo, *all that the Synod hath said, is not enough to make a man capable of transmitting right of Baptism unto his childe. The judgement of that famous* Martin Bucer, *alledged and approved by* Parker, *is worthy our consideration, who maintained, that* [t] None ought to be confirmed Members of the Church, besides those who do hold forth not onely verbal Profession of Faith, but apparent Signs of Regeneration. *Nay, these great Divines say, That if there be not* tam necessaria signa fidei quam publica & solennis Professio, *as well* such signs and outward appearances of Faith, as shall necessarily argue (*as farre as men can judge*) that there is truth in the heart, as a publick solemn Profession, the Church ought not to accept of the Professions of such persons, so as to confirm them in their Membership. *If the Synod would but have expressed as much as this, there had been no* Dissenting *on our parts. Here also we cannot but take notice, that the judgement of that worthy and for-ever famous Mr.* Cotton *was as ours is; for his words are these:* [u] I conceive more positive fruits of Regeneration are required in the Church-members of the New Testament, then of the Old.

t Bucer de regno Christi in cap. de Confirmatione. Parker ubi supra.

u Holiness of Church members, p. 93.

6. The Application of the Seal of Baptism unto those who are not true Believers (*we mean visibly, for* de occultis non judicat Ecclesiā) is a Profanation thereof, and as dreadful a sin, as if a man should administer the Lords Supper unto unworthy receivers; which is (*as* [w] Calvin *saith*) as sacrilegious impiety, as if a man should take the Blood or Body of Christ, and prostitute it to dogs. *We marvel that any should think, that the Blood of Christ is not as much profaned and vilified by* undue Administration of Baptism, *as by* undue Ad[illegible]*ing of* Austin's *is solemn and serious,* [x] Qui indigne accipit Baptisma, judicium accipit non salutem. *He* [illegible] *either for himse*[illegible]*sus, as well as he wh*[illegible] *the same* Austin *in his Bo*[illegible] *for* strictness in the Administration of Baptism: [illegible] Tertullian *before him.*

w Instit. l. 4. c. 12

x August. contra Fulgent. c. 6.

y [illegible] 809

7. It

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[l] *Catechumeni ad Baptiſterium nunquam admittendi ſunt.* Concil. Arauſ. c. 19.

[m] Concil. Gern. diſt. 4.

[n] *Juels* Reply to *Harding.* p. 553.

[o] *Dav. Chyrae*

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Generation *would be a* true Church of Chriſt, *without any further Act or Covenanting. But this* ſecond Generation *are not a* true Church of Chriſt *without ſome further Act.* Ergo, *they do not retain their Membership. If they are a* true Church of Chriſt, *then they have Power to Vote in* Church-affairs, *as to chuſe Officers, and to caſt out Offenders, and the like; becauſe every* true Church *hath this power given to them by the Lord Jeſus, who is the onely* Head of his Church. *But* they have no ſuch Power (*ſay the Synod, who do expreſly* [r] *exclude the perſons in queſtion from the Lords Supper and Voting:*) *Therefore we conclude that they are no* true Church of Chriſt. *Therefore the perſons in queſtion do not retain their Membership; therefore their children ought not to be Baptized.*

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[s] Mr. Hooker, Survey, part. 3. p. 17.

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[t] *Bucer de regno Chriſti, in cap. de Confirmatione.* Parker *ubi ſupra.*

[u] *Holineſs of Church-members,* p. 93.

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[w] *Inſtit. l. 4. c. 15.*

[x] *Auguſt. ex Fulgent. c. 6.*

7, It:

7. It hath in it a natural tendency to the hardening of unregenerate creatures in their ſinful natural condition, when Life is not onely Promiſed, but Sealed to them by the precious Blood of Jeſus Chriſt. [y] Baptiſm is a Seal of the whole Covenant of Grace, as well as the Lords Supper; and therefore thoſe that are not intereſted in this Covenant by Faith, ought not to have the Seal thereof applied to them. *Thus have we given an Account of the principal* Reaſons *which cauſed our* Diſſent from the major part of the Reverend Aſſembly. *We might adde to all this,* That there is danger of great Corruption and Pollution creeping into the Churches, by the Enlargement of the Subject of Baptiſm. *They are the words of a good man, and faithful Miniſter of the Goſpel now in* Europe, *in a Letter ſent unto one in* America: I hope (*ſaith he*) ſome in *New-England* will with clear light ſtand up againſt the Enlarging of Baptiſm to any, but thoſe whoſe Parents are admitted unto the Lords Supper. If ever it be paſſant Doctrine in the Churches, that others have a right to it, Farewell to *New-England*'s Peculiar Glory of undefiled Adminiſtrations of holy things. Theſe things are Diſcouragements with me, from haſtening to *New-England*. *Thus he. It may be ſome will think that we do* (*as it is in the Adage*) Nodum in ſcirpo quærere, *make ſcruples to our ſelves, and fear where there is no fear: Well it will be for us, and for the Churches, if in the end it prove ſo.*

Now the Lord grant, that his People may have one heart and one way (*and that it may be the* right way, *even the* way which is called Holy) to ſerve him, for the good of them, and of their Children after them. *And the God of* Truth *and* Peace, *lead us by his Spirit into* all Truth, *through him who is made unto us of God,* the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.

[y] *Baptiſma totum fœdus gratiæ obſignat fidelibus.* Ames. Med. l. 1. c. 40. Theſ. 6.

CERTAIN

James Foster [1] for Book 16

CERTAIN POSITIONS

Out of the

HOLY SCRIPTURES,

Premiſed to the whole enſuing

DISCOURSE.

WEE may fitly begin this Diſcourſe, with what the Reverend Elders ſay (in their Preface to their Printed Book) That the Prayer of *Epaphras* for the *Coloſſians*, ought to be the Prayer and Labour of us all, viz. *That we may ſtand perfect and compleat in all the will of God.* And it is a good Profeſſion which they make, ſaying, *We truſt it is our ſincere deſire, that it is will, all his will, and nothing but his will may be done among us. To the Law and to the Teſtimony we do wholly referre our ſelves; and if any thing in the following Concluſions be indeed found not to ſpeak according thereunto, let it be rejected.* This doth encourage me to joyn with them, in ſeeking the right path in this unfrequented way, ſo far as the Glory of Gods Holineſs and Grace, together with the honour of his Truth, may be manifeſted to be dearer to us then all Creature-concernments and Self-reſpects. In order whereunto, I conceive our principal inquiry ſhould be, what thoſe more general Principles of Truth are, which lie in the things controverted, and how they may be rightly applied: uſing herein onely ſuch Light as the Scripture affordeth, by comparing one Text with another, and depending on God in Chriſt for ſupply and aſſiſtance of the Spirit of Truth to lead us into theſe Principles, and to teach us by them; that thereby we may be brought to an univerſal harmony

of Truth; all the Lines of Truth (however ſeparated in the Circumference) meeting together in theſe Principles, as in their Centre, and becoming one Point. The finding out of ſuch Principles, and rightly applying them, would make the way to Truth ſhorter, the myſtery of Truth clearer, and the united force of Truth ſtronger againſt Errour, a ſweeter cloſing of Spirits among good men, and the examining of other mens Opinions eaſier, then walking after the larger Circumference of the voluminous Writings of men, which lead us further from theſe Principles, then the Scripture alone. This is that which I would attain, and am preſſing after, as in other Controverſies, ſo in theſe Queſtions. For clearing the truth wherein, I ſhall firſt propound certain *Theſes*, or *Poſitions*: Secondly apply them, in a way of *Replying* to their *Propoſitions*.

1. The *Theſes* or *Poſitions* propounded ſhall be theſe following, and the like.

1. *Poſition.* The whole Scripture, *breathed of God*, holdeth forth a perfect Rule, as of Righteouſneſs toward men, ſo, of Holineſs toward God, in all things that concern his Natural and Inſtituted Worſhip, *that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works*, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.

2. *Poſition.* Jeſus Chriſt, *the Apoſtle and High Prieſt of our Profeſſion*, is to be conſidered, by all *holy Brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling*, as not inferiour in his Office to *Moſes*: For, as the Office of *Moſes* reached to all the Houſe of God, and all the Service of it under the Law; ſo Chriſts Office reacheth to all the Church of God, and all the Service of it under the Goſpel. 2. And whatſoever Chriſt did inſtitute or abrogate in the Chriſtian Churches, he did it by Gods appointment; as *Moſes*, by Gods appointment, gave out what he delivered in the Church of *Iſrael*. 3. And Chriſt is no leſs faithful therein, then *Moſes* was, *Heb.* 3. 2, 3. So that it is as unlawful for men to alter the Ordinances of Chriſt given to Chriſtian Churches, under the Goſpel, or to adde thereunto, or to diminiſh ought therefrom, as it was under the Law, *Deut.* 12. 32. *Mat.* 28. 20.

3. *Poſition.* Chriſt is not rightly conſidered, nor duely eſteemed, except he be preferred as far above *Moſes*, as the Father hath counted him worthy

worthy of more Glory then *Moſes*; and as far above the whole Church, as the Builder is above the Houſe in honour and authority. Mens authority being but Miniſterial, as Servants, who are to act onely by direction and appointment; Chriſts authority being Magiſterial and Deſpotical, which Prerogative he hath as he is Son of the Eternal Father by eternal generation. Hence the Church is Chriſt's own Houſe, and he alone may diſpoſe of it, and of the Service thereof, as it pleaſeth him, by altering the Moſaical Levitical Ordinances, and appointing a more Spiritual and ſimple way of Worſhip in place thereof, *Hebr.* 3.3, *to* 7. *Joh.* 4.23 24. 2 *Cor.* 11.2,3.

The Ordinances of God given by *Moſes* for the Service of God under the firſt Tabernacle, were impoſed on the Jews, *until the time of Reformation* at the coming of Chriſt, who being come as the true *Melchiſedec*, changed the Levitical Ordinances into other more ſuitable to his Royal Prieſthood. *Heb.* 9.9,10. *For, the Prieſthood being changed, there is made of neceſſity a change of the Law*, Heb. 7.12. And, having taken away that *unſupportable Yoke*, calleth Believers under the Goſpel to take his *eaſie and ſweet Yoke upon them*, Acts 15.10. Mat. 11.29. 4 *Poſition.*

Though the Covenant of *Abraham* was the ſame in ſubſtance to believing Jews under the Law, and to Believers, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, under the Goſpel, *Rom.* 4.11, 12. And, though the Kingdome of God be the ſame in ſubſtance, which is taken from the unbelieving *Jews*, and given to the believing *Gentiles*, *Matth.* 21.43. yet the adminiſtration of the Covenant and Kingdome is not the ſame, in all ages, but varied according to the different times, wherein the Church hath been gathered; the progreſs thereof, in that variety, being from leſs perfect, before the coming of Chriſt, to more perfect, after his coming: the former was more external and carnal, *Heb.* 9.10. the latter more internal and ſpiritual, *Joh.* 1.17. that was accommodated to the ſtate of the Church being *a childe*; this to the ſtate of the Church being *an heir grown to full age*, Gal. 4. 1, *to* 5. 5 *Poſition.*

Though Baptiſm is come in the place of Circumciſion, and therefore infants of Confederates are now to be baptized, as then they were to be circumciſed, they both being outward Seals of 6 *Poſition.*

the ſame Covenant in ſubſtance, *Col.*2. 11,12. *Rom.*4.11. Yet, neither muſt we look at Circumciſion as it was of *Moſes*, but of the Fathers, *Ib.*7.22 nor at every ſubject of Circumciſion, as the ſubject of Baptiſm extenſively. Circumciſion was extended to all that were born in the houſe, and bought with money, *Gen.*17 12,13. But Baptiſm is limited to believing Iews and their children, and to ſo many as the Lord our God ſhall call, *Acts* 2. 38,39. 1 *Cor.*7.14. *Your children are holy*; he ſaith not, Your ſervants, &c.

7 *Poſition.* The Rules accommodated, by Ieſus Chriſt our Lord, for the manner of applying the Covenant, and of adminiſtring the Kingdome of God, under the Goſpel, concern either the conſtitution and ordering of Chriſtian Churches; or the propagation and continuing of them; or their communion together. In all which, both the Truth, and the Arguments for confirmation of it, muſt be drawn expreſly, or by good conſequence, from the New Teſtament, in ſuch particulars wherein we have Chriſt's appointment, or the Primitive Churches, planted or approved by the Apoſtles, for our Patterns. Not from the Old Teſtament, further then they may be inferred thence by parity of reaſon, *Mat.*28.20. 1 *Tim.*3.14,15.

8 *Poſition.* The Rules given of Chriſt, 1. Concerning *The Conſtitution of Chriſtian Churches*, are 1. That the Matter of them muſt be, if adult, approved Believers, *Acts* 5.14. if infants, or children in minority, ſuch whoſe Parents (both or one) are orderly, and viſibly joyned to the Church of Chriſt, *Acts* 2.39. 1 *Cor.*7.14. 2. That the Form of them, muſt be their viſible confederating with the Lord Chriſt, as the Head of the Church, and one with another mutually, to walk together according to his Rules, for the attainment of the ends of Church-communion, 2 *Cor.*8.5. 1 *Pet.*2.5.

9 *Poſition.* The Rules given by Chriſt for *The Ordering of Chriſtian Churches*, are, 1. In general; that all Goſpel Ordinances be diſpenſed and adminiſtred according to Goſpel-Precepts and Patterns, *Col.*2.5,6. 2. In particular; 1. That fit perſons be orderly admitted into this holy Fellowſhip, *by the Door*, which is Chriſt believed on and profeſſed, *Joh.*10.7,9. 2. That Officers appointed

pointed by Christ be regularly chosen and ordained, and that the Elders, both Teaching and Ruling, especially Teaching, be singularly loved, and honoured with *double honour*, and obeyed, 1 *Tim.* 3. *Tit.* 1 *Thl.* 1. 1. *Acts* 6. 6. & 14. 23. 1 *Thess.* 5. 12, 13. 1 *Tim.* 4. 17, 18. *Heb.* 13. 17. 2. That the Members exercise mutual Watchfulness one over another, *Heb.* 10. 24, 25. with mutual Submission of one to another, and of every one to the whole Body, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. 3. That the visible Seals, instituted by Christ for Gospel-Churches, which are onely two, *Baptism*, and the *Lords Supper*, 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. be administred by the Teaching Officers, according to Christs Institution, *Mat.* 28. 19. 1. *Baptism* is to be administred by Christs Ordinance to Disciples, *ibid.* *Viz.* 1. To grown persons not before baptized, after their holding forth their Repentance and Faith in Christ, and voluntary taking hold of the Covenant for themselves and their seed, *Mat.* 3. 6. *Luke* 3. 3. *Acts* 8 37, 38. & 2. 38, 39. 1 *Cor.* 12. 12, 13. These, for distinction sake, I call *Immediate Members*. 2. To their infant-seed or children in minority, who also are members in the right of their Parents covenanting for them, *Acts* 2. 39. 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. these I call *Mediate Members*; because the membership which they have is *Mediante Parentum fœdere*: therefore, these being grown up, must be admitted into immediate fellowship, and full communion with the Church, by their personal faith held forth to satisfaction of the Churches charitable discretion, and by their taking hold of the Covenant for themselves and their seed, as their Parents before them did; as it is propheſied of Gospel-Churches in *Isa.* 56. 6, 7. & 62 5. 2. The *Lords Supper* is to be administred according to Christ's Institution, in reference both to the Ordinance it self, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23, *to* 27. and to the Communicants, *ver.* 27 *to* 32. 4. That Church-censures be applied to delinquent Members, in private offences, according to *Mat.* 18 15 *to* 18. and in publick criminous Scandals, according to 1 *Cor.* 5. 11. *Rev.* 22. 15. but so as the publick judgement be, not by the Elders alone, but, together with them, by the Fraternity, 1 *Cor* 5 12.

The Rules given of Christ, *for the Propagation and Continuing of Christian Churches*, are properly suited to their Congregational 10 *Position.*

and Spiritual ſtate. They are not the ſame with thoſe before the Law, when the Church was onely in Families, nor with thoſe under the Law given to the Church of the Jews: in both which the Church was to be propagated, and continued by natural generation, in a lineal deſcent, from *Noah*, by *Shem*; and from *Abraham*, by *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, till the coming of Chriſt; this way beſt ſuiting to a Domeſtical and National Church, in their reſpective conſtitutions. Chriſtian Churches are of neither of theſe ſorts, but are, by Chriſt's appointment, caſt into a Congregational, and more Spiritual Form; and therefore, are not capable of being propagated and continued, in a lineal ſucceſſion, by natural generation, ordinarily: but muſt be propagated and continued 1. In adult perſons, by Regeneration viſibly manifeſted to the charitable diſcretion of the Church, *Joh.* 3. 3,5. being wrought in the working of Faith in Chriſt, *Joh.*1.12,13. and made viſible, by a right confeſſion and profeſſion of Faith, both *quæ creditur*, Rom.10.10. and *quâ creditur*, Gal.3.26. 2. In their infant-ſeed, by their Parents covenanting for them; to the end, that ſuch, being engaged to God in their infancy, may be thereby engaged and excited the more to give up themſelves to God in Chriſt, when they come to years of diſcretion, *not by conſtraint, but willingly*, Pſal.110.3. through *the operation of God* working Faith in their hearts, *Col.*2.12. by the Spirit, who is a voluntary Agent, and therefore likened *to the wind which bloweth where it liſteth*, Joh.3.8. Sometimes in ſome of the next poſterity, yet not in all, 2 *Joh.*4. ſometimes in the Grandmother, and Mother, and Childe; as in *Timothy*, 2 *Tim.*1.5. Accordingly the Church muſt make a difference of Children grown up, where God makes a difference, as he did between *Jacob* and *Eſau*, *Mal.*1.2. and receive onely ſuch whom Chriſt receiveth, *Rom.*14.1,?.

Poſition. The Rules given of Chriſt, *Concerning the Communion of Chriſtian Churches*, are, 1. Concerning the Ground of it; which is their Spiritual Union under one Head, Chriſt, *Eph.*1.22,23. in one Body, one Spirit, one Hope of their calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one God and Father of all, and they muſt *endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the band of peace*, Eph.4. 3,4,5,6. As they have one *common Faith*, Tit.1.4. ſo they muſt

contend

contend earneſtly for the faith once given to the Saints, Jude, *ver.* 3. They have alſo *one* and the ſame *Rule*, Gal. 6 16. *The ſame Officers*, in all Churches, *Tit.* 1. 5. *The ſame Ordinances and Decrees*, 1 *Cor.* 7 17. & 16. 1. *Acts* 16. 4. *The ſame Order*, Col. 2. 5. *The ſame Doctrine*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 17. & 15. 11. *Gal.* 1. 7. which all the Churches muſt *hold faſt*, Rev. 3. 3. and renounce all other Doctrines, *Gal.* 1. 8, 9. 1 *Tim.* 1. 3. & 6. 3. 14.

2. Concerning the Manner of it; for, as the Church generally conſidered, is *the Mother of all the faithful*, Gal 4. 26. ſo particular Churches are *Siſters* each to other, *Cant.* 8. 8. and there is *a Brotherhood* of viſible Saints throughout the World, 1 *Pet.* 5. 9. Hence the manner of their communion muſt be *ſocial*, as between equals, none exerciſing juriſdiction and authority over another. *Par in parem, non habet imperium.* The giving of Laws to the Churches is *Chriſts* Prerogative, *Ism.* 4. 12. who hath alſo committed the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven to each particular inſtituted Church, to be exerciſed by each Church within it ſelf, without dependance upon the Authority of other Churches *in re propriâ*, *Mat.* 16. 19. 1 *Cor.* 5. 12.

3. Concerning the Things, wherein this communion muſt be exerciſed, 1. In general; in mutual Helpfulneſs, according to God, by mutual care one of, and for another, 1 *Cor.* 10. 24. *Phil.* 2. 20 21. 2. Particularly, 1. By Spiritual Helpfulneſs, and care exerciſed

1. In mutual Prayer, and endeavours for their edification, *Cant.* 8. 8, 9. 1 *Cor.* 12 7. 1 *Pet.* 4. 10, 11. and for their confirmation and eſtabliſhment in the truth, *Acts* 15. 41. & 16. 4, 5. and for ſtrengthning each other in the regular application of Church-cenſures to their delinquent Members, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 14. 2 *Tim.* 4. 15.

2. By outward Supplies unto their Neceſſities, *Acts* 11. 29. *Rom.* 15. 26, 27. 2 *Cor.* 8. 2, *&c.* throughout that *Chapter*.

3. By their mutual care to avoid Offences, 1 *Cor.* 10. 32.

4. That, when a Church findeth need (in reſpect of want of light, or of competent conſent within it ſelf) it is their duty to ſeek help by the counſel of ſome other Church or Churches, and the other Church or Churches ought to give it, in a brotherly way,

way, from the Word of God, not by the Elders apart, but in the preſence, and with concurrence of the Brethren, *Acts* 15. 4, 22, 23. nor may they bind ſuch a Church to reſt in their determination, further then the ſame ſhall be found, upon ſearching the Scriptures, to *ſeem good to the Holy Ghoſt*, as well as to them, *Acts* 15.28. or, if Neighbour-Churches finde it neceſſary, to offer their helpfulneſs to a Church, in caſe of the Officers Male-adminiſtration, or of Errours, and Scandals, and Schiſms, and the like caſes, to prevent the infection of themſelves, or to remove corruption from ſuch a Church, which, being obſtinate in their way, ſeeketh not for help, the Neighbour-Churches ought to exerciſe the Communion of Churches, by enquiring to finde out the truth, and by admoniſhing the offending Church, in a brotherly way; whereunto that Church ought to ſubmit according to God, *Rom.*16.17 *Gal.*2.11--14. And, if it obſtinately perſiſteth in *ſcandalous Evils*, after convincing light held forth, the offended Churches may renounce communion with them, to avoid fellowſhip in their ſin, *Epb.* 5. 11 1 *Tim.*5.22.

12 *Poſition.* The Rules given by *Chriſt to Chriſtian Churches*, in the *Premiſes*, and the like, are to be Received by all the Churches, and the Members of them, and to be obeyed, as his Laws and Commandments, who is our *one Law-giver*. In obſerving whereof, and not otherwiſe, the *Purity and Peace of Chriſtian Churches will be preſerved, by the bleſſing of Chriſt*, *Iam.* 4.12. *Mat.*28.20. 1 *Cor.*14.37. 1 *Tim.*6 13. *Gal.*6:16.

Theſe, and the like, being *general Principles of Truth*, the particular *Determinations of the Synod*, in the *Two Queſtions*, are to be Examined by them; and ſo far, and no further, to be Approved and Received, as a conſent and harmeny of them with theſe, may be cleared to the conſciences of men rightly informed which may be manifeſted by a right application, and comparing them together.

2. The Application of the former *Theſes* or *Poſitions* to the *Queſtions* and *Anſwers*, as they are ſtated and expreſſed by the Reverend Elders, in their Printed Book, followeth.

The

The first Question propounded to them by the Honoured General Court, was,

"Queſt. 1. *Who are the Subjects of Baptiſm?*

"Anſw. *The Anſwer may be given in the following Propoſitions.* Which are ſeven in number.

"Propoſ. 1 *They that according to Scripture, are Members of "the viſible Church, are the Subjects of Baptiſm.*

"Propoſ. 2. *The Members of the viſible Church, according to "Scripture, are Confederate viſible Believers, in particular "Churches, and their infant-ſeed, i. e. children in minority, "whoſe next Parents, one or both, are in Covenant.*

Reply. I cannot approve the two firſt Propoſitions, without ſome change of the terms. In the firſt, thus; they that, according to Chriſt's Ordinance, *are regular, and actual Memb*, &c. The ſecond, thus; *The actual and regular Members of the viſible Church, according to Chriſts Ordinance, are*, &c. The neceſſity of this alteration will appear, if, either the premiſed Poſitions be duely conſidered, wherewith theſe Propoſitions will not otherwiſe agree: or, if the Proofs alledged by them from Scripture for confirmation of theſe two Propoſitions, be duely examined; or, if what is hereafter to be Replied unto the following Propoſitions, ſhall be duely weighed.

"Propoſ. 3. *The infant-ſeed of confederate viſible believers, are "Members of the ſame Church with their Parents, and when "grown up, are perſonally under the Watch, Diſcipline and Go-"vernment of the Church.*

This Propoſition conſiſteth of two parts, both which they endeavour to prove diſtinctly.

"1 *That they are Members of the ſame Church with their Pa-"rents*] This may paſs in a right ſenſe, being underſtood of *Mediate Members*, in and by their Parents covenanting for them, in their infancy, or minority. I ſhall not oppoſe it.

"2 *That when they are growne, they are perſonally under the "Watch, Diſcipline and Government of the Church*] This expreſſion call for ſerious conſideration, and the Proofs of it require due examination. 1. For the Expreſſion the meaning of it ſeems to be this; That when the children, that were baptized in their

minority, are grown up to years of discretion, or become men, they are Members, (or, as they speak afterward, *new Members*) and by that membership, are under the Watch, Discipline, and Government of the Church. But what membership is this? Their membership, in their minority, was *mediate*, in and by their Parents covenanting for them, as themselves say in *pag.* 14. and answerably, they are under the Watch of the Church in and by their Parents, who are immediately, and personally under the Watch, Discipline and Government of the Church, which is to see that the Parents do their duty, and perform their Covenant for them, in *bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, *Eph.*6.4. and to help them therein.

But by what right are they personally under the Watch, Discipline, and Government of the Church? Nor by their Parents Covenant: for that was theirs onely in their infancy, and minority; because then they were not capable of covenanting for themselves personally. It remains then, that, when grown up, they must be, either not members of the Church personally, or members by their personal covenanting for themselves and theirs, as other adult persons must be, who offer themselves to Church-fellowship: Else, though they were members of the same Church with their Parents, in their infancy, and minority; yet they continue not members, when grown up, nor are personally under the Watch, Discipline, and Government of the Church, by their own fault. But they say the contrary is manifest. Therefore let us examine their Arguments.

"Arg. 1. *Children were under Patriarchal and Mosaical Discipline of old*, Gen.18.19. & 21.9,10,12. Gal.5.3. *and therefore under Congregational Discipline now.*

Reply 1. The Texts alledged do not prove the Antecedent. 1. *Abrahams* commanding his children and household after him, to *keep the way of the Lord*, &c. doth not necessarily infer Church-discipline: It being enjoyned to all Fathers of Families, in the National Church of *Israel*, *Deut.*6.7. & 11.19. and in the Congregational Churches of Christ, under the Gospel, *Eph.*6.4. within their own Families, where they have not power to exercise Church-discipline: or, if any further thing was meant,

it

it may be applied to the command concerning Circumcision, as Gen.17 26,27. 2. That in Gen.21 9 where *Ishmael*, who was born after the flesh, persecuted *Isaac* who was born after the Spirit, and was therefore cast out of the Church, in *Abrahams* Family, is improved by the Apostle to another purpose, in *Gal.* 4. 22---29 nor doth it prove their Proposition. For *Ishmael* was not circumcised at *eight dayes old*, but when he was *thirteen years old*: and therefore may be thought to be circumcised upon his *personal taking hold of the Covenant*, as other grown persons in the family did, there being nothing said in that story to evince the contrary. To which opinion *Polycarpus Lyserus* seemeth to incline. If it was so, then there is a manifest difference between *Ishmaels* case, and the children of confederates, baptized in infancy: for *Ishmael* was admitted into Church-fellowship and full communion, by his personal covenanting, whereupon he was circumcised. being grown up to years of discretion, and so might be regularly excommunicated, which they who never were in full communion may not be. 2. To prove that children were under *Mosaical discipline of old*, they produce only one Text, *Gal.*5.3. where the Apostle speaking of circumcision, (not as it was given of God, and rightly used by *Abraham*, *as a seal of the righteousness which is by faith*, Rom 4.11. but as it was abused by false Teachers, to establish Justification by the works of the Law) *testifieth to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law, and that therefore Christ shall profit them nothing.* Because he that seeketh Righteousness in Circumcision, is bound, by like reason, to seek it in other works of the Law. Therefore this text doth not prove that for which it is alledged, *viz.* that Children circumcised in infancy, were, being grown up, under the external Mosaical Watch, Discipline, and Government of the Church.

Reply 2. Their Argument also is to be denied: Because, if the Antecedent were more manifestly true then it is found to be; yet the Consequent is not good. For there is not *Par ratio*, the like reason of those Patriarchal, and Mosaical Churches, and Congregational Churches under the Gospel. The members of the Church, in the *Patriarchs time*, were to continue in com-

munion with the Church, from their being circumciſed all the dayes of their life, until they were caſt out, as perſecuting *Ishmael* was, or voluntarily departed from it, as prophane *Esau* did, together with his poſterity; which was ordered by Gods ſpecial Providence to ſeparate the *Ishmaelites* and *Edomites* from *the Iſraelites, of whom, as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came*, Rom. 9. 5. As for the Church of *Iſrael*, under *Moſes*, 1. We do not reade of any Ordinance given them for caſting out their members for ſins againſt the Moral Law; as we finde it to be commanded and practiſed under the Goſpel, 1 *Cor.* 5. 4, 5 11. 2. The grown members of the Church of *Iſrael*, under *Moſes*, were brought under ſuch Diſcipline, as was eſtabliſhed in that Church, by a ſolemn Covenant, whereof all adult perſons were, by Gods Ordinance, to take hold *perſonally*, and to have full communion with that Church in all Legal Ordinances, *Deut.* 26. 16, 17, 18. But we have no ſuch Ordinance, under the Goſpel, whereby the grown children of Chriſtian Churches are members in full communion or, as *meer members*, brought under Church-diſcipline, and Government, in Congregational Churches.

" Arg. 2. *They are within the Church, or Members thereof:* " *and therefore ſubject to Church-judicature*, 1 Cor. 5 12.

Reply. The Argument is to be denied, in their ſenſe; nor doth the text prove it: for that text ſpeaketh of men that are members in full communion. Such an one was that *inceſtuous Corinthian*, till he was taken away from among them by Excommunication, 1 *Cor.* 5. 1, 2, 5. and ſuch were they who were afterward ſpoken of in *ver.* 11. who were called *Brethren*, in reſpect of their full communion with the Church, before they were put, by the juſt cenſure of the Church, into that ſtate, wherein the members are *forbidden to eat with him*. And of that Church-judicature he ſpeaks in *ver.* 12. ſaying, *Do not you judge them that are within*, viz. in full membership, as well of all other Ordinances, as of Cenſures. And indeed, ſeeing Excommunication is the caſting out from communion; How can any be formally excommunicated, who were never in communion and ſo within the Church? Now themſelves deny ſuch communion to the *adult perſons*, whom they call *meer members*, to diſtinguiſh them from

members.

members in full communion: therefore not ſubject to Judicature of the Church, according to the meaning of that text.

" Arg. 3 *They are Diſciples, and therefore under Diſcipline in* " *Chriſts School*, Mat 28.19,20.

Reply. Though all Church-members are Diſciples; infants, *fœderall*, in and by their Parents covenanting for them; and adult perſons, *perſonally*, by their covenanting for themſelves, and therefore both are under the Diſcipline of the Church ſuitably to their membership: the firſt, in and under their Parents; the ſecond, in and by themſelves, being in full communion with the Church; Yet I do not finde *any where in Scripture*, that ſuch adult perſons as they call *later Members*, are ſtyled *Diſciple*, or accounted *Members*. The adult perſons in *Mat.* 28 20. muſt *obſerve and do all Chriſt commandments*; therefore the Diſciples there intended, with reference to adult perſons, are members in full communion.

" Arg 4. *They are in Church-covenant*; *therefore ſubject to* " *Church-power*, Gen. 17.7. *with* 18.19.

Reply. They are not in covenant *de facto*, being adult, and not admitted into Church-communion, in all the Ordinances; therefore are not ſubject to Church power. That text in *Gen* 17.7. hath reſpect eſpecially to *Iſaac*, *ver.* 9. for in *Iſaac* was *Abrahams* ſeed to be called, *Gen.* 21.12. *So the children of the fleſh are not the children of God, but the children of the promiſe are accounted for the ſeed*, Rom. 9.8. and, *The Gentiles are adopted through faith in Chriſt*. Gal. 3.26. for it is in Chriſt (either apprehended by perſonal faith, as in adult perſons, or comprehending children in their Parents Covenant) that the Covenant is *everlaſting*, and ſo to be perpetually continued in the ſubſtance of it; though by mutable ſigns. *Jer.* 31. The Covenant of Grace is eternal, though it was to be viſibly ſealed by circumciſion, till the coming of Chriſt, and after the coming of Chriſt by Baptiſm perpetually unto the end of the World. There is no difference between us, concerning the infant-ſeed, but onely concerning adult perſons, who are, by age in a capacity of covenanting for themſelves and theirs. Let theſe approve their faith in Chriſt, to the charitable diſcretion of the Church, and ſo be received into Co-

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venant, and Church-communion perſonally; and then, and not otherwiſe they are regularly ſubject to Church-power. Their ſecond proof from *Gen* 18. 19. hath been ſpoken to before, when I examined their *firſt Argument* for this *third Propoſition*.

" Arg. 5. *They are Subjects of the Kingdome of Chriſt; and* " *therefore under the Laws and Government of his Kingdome*, Ezek. " 37. 25 26

Reply. This Argument may juſtly be retorted againſt themſelves, and the Proof of it. For, 1. Subjects of Chriſts Kingdome there meant, are voluntary Subjects, according to that Propheſie in *Pſal.* 110 3. and ſuch Subjects have full communion in all priviledges of Chriſts Kingdome, and ſo under the Government of it But they deny that the *meer Members*, of whom they ſpeak, have communion in all the priviledges of Chriſts Kingdome. Therefore, they are not under the Laws and Government of it, and by Conſequence they are not Subjects of it.

" Arg. 7. *Baptiſm leaves the baptized (of which number theſe chil-* " *dren are) in a ſtate of ſubjection to the authoritative teaching of Chriſts* " *Miniſters, and to the obſervation of all his commandments*, Mat. 28. " 19, 20 *and therefore in a ſtate of ſubjection unto Diſcipline.*

Anſ. This is not another Argument, but the ſame with the third Argument, though clothed with other words. Therefore the ſame Anſwer may ſerve for this alſo.

" Arg. 7. *Elders are charged to take heed unto, and to feed* (i. e. " *both to Teach and Rule, compare* Ezek 34. 3 4.) *all the Flock,* " *or Church, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made them Overſeers,* " Acts 20. 28. *That children are a part of the Flock, was proved* " *before: and ſo Paul accounts them, writing to the ſame Flock, or* " *Church of* Epheſus, *Eph.* 6. 1.

Reply. Be it ſo that children are part of the Flock which is all that I finde before proved and that Elders are charged to take heed, and to feed (i. e. both *Teach* and *Rule*) all the Flock ſuitably, to their different capacities; yet all this concerneth not ſuch grown perſons, to whom they deny full Church-communion For they that are of competent age and underſtanding, muſt be orderly joyned

joyned to the Church, by holding forth their calling and faith in Chriſt to the ſatisfaction of the Church, according to the Rule, and ſo to be received into fellowſhip of the Covenant and Communion, by their perſonal right, without which they are not to be accounted of the Flock or Church. Nor did *Paul* ſo account ſuch. But thoſe children noted in *Eph.* 6 1 were either in their minority and ſo he puts in their duty in that Epiſtle as part of their Catechetical inſtruction; or, if they were adult they were perſonally joyned to the Church in communion, and ſo were under the teaching and diſcipline of the Church.

"Arg. 8. *Otherwiſe Irreligion and Apoſtacy would inevitably* "*break into Churches, and no way left by Chriſt to prevent or heal* "*the ſame, which would alſo bring many Church-members under* "*that dreadful judgement of being let alone in their wickedneſs,*" Hoſ. 4 16,17.

Reply. 1. There is no cauſe of fear that Irreligion and Apoſtacy will break into Churches, if the *Porter* look well unto the *Doors of the Lords Houſe*, that no adult perſons be received into *perſonal Membership*, but ſuch as regularly approve their *perſonal fitneſs* for all Church-communion. Or, if ſuch evils break into the Church, through the hypocriſie of ſuch as *creep in unawares*, Jude, ve. 4. yet then Chriſt hath left a clear and plain way to prevent and heal the ſame, by *ſubjecting ſuch under the Watch, and Diſcipline, and Government of the Church*. But the admitting of ſuch adult perſons, as are not qualified for Church communion in all Ordinances, will be found, in the iſſue, the cauſe of the breaking in of Irreligion and Apoſtacy into Churches, by the fault of men, who *gather without Chriſt*, and *receive ſuch as he rejecteth*. Nor will the Churches cenſuring of ſuch, prevent or heal thoſe evils, ſeeing he bleſſeth onely his own Inſtitutions, not mens Devices. Humane Inventions uſually cauſe the Evils which they pretend to cure; as we ſee in the *Love-feaſts*, which brake love among the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 18---22. 2. Though no Church-way is left by Chriſt for preventing or healing ſuch evils in men that ſhould not be of the Church; yet, if they were kept out of the Church, till their fitneſs of communion ſhould appear; as theſe evils, and the like, would not inevitably break into

Churches,

Churches, ſo neither need any *Church-members be let alone in their wickedneſs*, ſeeing Chriſt hath delegated *the Keys of the Kingdome of Heaven*, to *binde* and *loſe*, and Directions how to manage them toward delinquent Members that are orderly admitted into Church-communion, *Mat.* 16.17,18,19. Nor need they who are not thus joyned to the Church, be *let alone*, if the Authority in Families and in the Common-wealth, be wiſely and faithfully managed by the Rulers of both, to reſtrain thoſe under their power from evil companies, and courſes, and to conſtrain them to a conſtant reverent attendance to all Family-duties of Religion, and to the Word publickly Preached in Church-Aſſemblies, and to the Sanctifying of the Chriſtian Sabbath, as a Day of holy Reſt unto the Lord. Such means will be bleſſed of Chriſt, to the preventing of the out-breakings, and ſome of them to the healing of thoſe evils Faith being wrought in their hearts, through the efficacy of the Spirit, in and by the Preaching of the Word; and ſo they will become fit to be received into Church-membership and communion.

Having thus examined their third Propoſition, I finde it deſtitute of Scripture-proofs, and therefore muſt leave it, as Irregular, and not agreeing with the *Poſitions* formerly given, for *Rules of Tryal, whether Doctrines and Practiſes in matters of Church-Order, agree with the Principles of Truth, or not.* I proceed to examine their fourth Propoſition, for anſwer to the firſt Queſtion.

" Propoſ 4. *Thoſe adult perſons are not therefore to be admitted*
" *to full Communion, meerly becauſe they are, and continue*
" *Members, without ſuch further qualifications as the Word of*
" *God requireth thereunto. The truth hereof*, they ſay, *is*
" *plain.*

Reply. Though it ſeems to them plain, yet it ſeems not ſufficiently cleared by their Proofs. " 1. *From* 1 Cor. 11. 28,29.
" *where it is required, that ſuch as come to the Lords Supper, be able*
" *to examine themſelves, and to diſcern the Lords Body; elſe they will*
" *eat and drink unworthily, and eat and drink damnation, or judge-*
" *ment to themſelves, when they partake of this Ordinance. But meer*
" *membership is ſeparable from ſuch ability to examine one's ſelf,*

and

" *and discern the Lords Body, as in the children of the Covenant that* " *grow up to years is too often seen.*

Repl. 1. The want of such abilities in the children of the Covenant, is indeed too often seen, through the too frequent neglect of Parents in their Education, and of Ministers and Churches in their Institution, and Catechizing, and Watching over them: which should awaken their circumspection in looking narrowly to their fitness for *personal Membership* when they grow up to years.

2. Though Membership be separable from, yea destitute of such ability in the infant-seed, or children of the Covenant in their minority, and therefore they are not to be admitted unto the *Lords Supper*, and that text proves it; yet it may not be granted that, when they are grown up to years, they are, and continue Members regularly, being through want of that ability not fit for Church-communion personally. For as if adult persons, being unbaptized, should desire to have the Covenant, and their Church-membership sealed by Baptism, they must hold forth Faith in Christ, wrought in their hearts, as *Philip* required the Eunuch, before they may be baptized, *Acts* 8 36 37. So, by parity of reason, if one baptized in infancy, being grown up to years, desires to be joyned to the Church by his own personal Right he must hold forth his personal Faith in the Son of God, to their charitable satisfaction, that they may know his ability *to examine himself, and discern the Lords Body*, before they admit him into *personal Membership*, which infers full communion with the Church.

" 2. They say, that, *In the Old Testament, though men did con-*
" *tinue members of the Church, yet for ceremonial uncleanness they*
" *were to be kept from full communion in the holy things*, Lev. 7. 20,
" 21. Numb. 9. 6,7. & 19. 13,20. *yea, and the Priests and Pu-*
" *riers had special charge, that men should not partake in all the holy*
" *things, unless duely qualified for the same, notwithstanding their*
" *membership*, 2 Chron. 23. 19. Ezek 22. 26 & 44. 7,8 9,23.
" *and therefore much more in these times, where Moral fitness and*
" *Spiritual qualifications are wanting, Membership alone is not suf-*
" *ficient for full communion. More was required to admit persons eating*
" *the Passover, then meer membership: therefore so there is now to the*
" *Lords Supper*, &c.

Reply. 1. The invalidity of Proofs from the Old Teſtament, under *Moſes*, being applied to Goſpel-Ordinances under Chriſt, and ſo this of Baptiſm under the New Teſtament, in things whereof there is not the like reaſon, hath been declared in the *fourth*, *ſixth*, and *eighth Poſition*, with which this Proof doth not agree.

2. If the Texts alledged were applicable to Church-members in the times of the Goſpel; yet they ſuit not the caſe in queſtion. For, all men, that were accounted Members of that Jewiſh Church, had full communion with that Church in all Legal Ordinances; even they that were ceremonially unclean had ſo, before their uncleanneſs, and after they were healed of their uncleanneſſes, as well as others.

3. Particularly: 1. The typical uncleanneſs in *Levit.* 7. 20, 21, &c. ſignified, that all Unbelievers, Hypocrites, and Wicked ones, that, profeſſing the Goſpel, partake of the outward Signs and Seals of Grace *unworthily, do eat and drink condemnation, or judgement, to themſelves*; according to 1 *Corinth.* 11. 28, 29. 2. Thoſe in *Numb.* 9. 6. who were unclean by the dead, might not come into the *Lords Sanctuary*, nor into the *Lords Camp*, as alſo every *Leper*, or *one that hath an Iſſue*, *Numb.* 5. 2. Thoſe legal pollutions ſignified ſin of all ſorts, and the removal of ſuch out of the *Lords Sanctuary* and *Camp*, figured the removal of ſcandalous and impenitent ſinners out of Church-communion, though they were in it before, and the keeping them from admittance into Church-fellowſhip, if they were not in before: for, *The unclean may not come into it*, Iſa. 52. 1. *Any thing that defileth, may in no wiſe enter into it*, Rev. 21. 27. 3. That Text in *Numb.* 19. 13, 20. concerns one who, being defiled by the dead, yet preſumptuouſly came into the Tabernacle, that is, into the Court of it, in his uncleanneſs, that man muſt be *cut off*: Otherwiſe, if he did it ignorantly, he was to bring *a ſacrifice*, Lev. 5. 3--6. becauſe he defiled the Sanctuary by coming into it, before he was purified. This, and the former Texts, figured, in reference to Goſpel-Churches, not the diſtinction between meer Members, and Members in Communion, (for no ſuch diſtinction of adult Members was known or made in that Church) but

but that they ſhould not admit any that are ſpiritually unclean (as all that are viſibly unregenerate are, *Tit.*1.15,16.) into Church-communion. And that they ſhould put away from Church-communion, by Excommunication, ſuch as were in Church-communion before ſuch uncleanneſs appeared in them, till their healing ſhould be manifeſted. 4. That which is added, concerning the charge given to the *Prieſts and Porters*, had been more fully, and ſo more truly expreſſed, if they had ſaid, Their charge was, *that men ſhould not partake of all the holy things, unleſs duely qualified for the ſame, notwithſtanding their* (not *Membership*, in their ſenſe but) *Membership in full communion with the Church*. For, ſuch Members the men of *Iſrael* were, before their Legal uncleanneſs: and they were alſo charged to keep out the Heathen uncircumciſed in fleſh, who never were Members. That text in *Ezek.*44.7,8,9. is a Propheſie of the times of the Goſpel, expreſſed under legal phraſes, according to the manner uſual with the Prophets, wherein the Goſpel-Churches, and their Officers, are forewarned (by the example of the Jews, under the Old Teſtament, with whom God was highly offended for the like abomination) not to admit ſuch as are uncircumciſed in heart into Church-fellowſhip, to defile the Lords Sanctuary, which is (not now, as then it was, a material Houſe, but) a Society of Saints, called, *an holy Generation, a Royal Prieſthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People, that they might ſhew forth the vertues of him, who hath called them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Such men therefore as cannot approve themſelves to the Churches charitable judgement, to anſwer this deſcription, in ſome meaſure, ſhould not be received into Church-fellowſhip.

Whereas they adde, that "*More was required to adult perſons* "*eating the Paſſover, than meer Membership; therefore ſo there* "*is now to the Lords Supper.*

Reply. It is true, that more then that Membership, which they had in their infancy, or minority, was required in adult perſons to eat the Paſſover. For, 1. When they became adult, they were to covenant ſolemnly with the Lord, and his People, in their own perſons, *Deut.*26.17, *&c.* whereunto heart fitneſs was neceſſary, that their perſons and ſervices might be accepted

of God, in that Church-communion, *Isa.* 56 4, 5. with *Deut.* 30.6. 2. This heart-fitneſs was alſo to be exerciſed, when they were to eat the Paſſover, ſuitably to the nature, end, and uſe of that Ordinance, 2 *Chron.* 30.6---9, 18, 19, &c. Thus they were to keep the Paſſover, once every year, all the daves of their life, till *Chriſt our Paſſover* was come: Since which time it is ſpiritually to be kept by Believers under the Goſpel particularly, in our communicating at the Lords Table) in remembrance of his Death, and of our Redemption thereby, untill he come, 1 *Cor.* 5. 7.8 & 11.25,26. but all they that did eat the Paſſover, were Members in full communion. The Membership of adult perſons then was not a meer Membership, but a Membership in full Church-communion. So it ought to be now.

"They ſay, *Though all Members of the Church are the Subjects* "*of Baptiſm, they and their children, yet all Members may not* "*partake of the Lords Supper, as is further manifeſt from the dif-* "*ferent nature of Baptiſm and the Lords Supper*, &c.

Reply. 1. Church-membership infers ſuch Church-communion, as is ſuitable to that Membership. The Membership of the children of Confederates, in minority, infers Church-communion, ſo far as they are capable of it, in and by their Parents covenanting for them, being not capable of covenanting for themſelves: Hence they have communion with the Church by being baptized 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. So the Church-membership of adult perſons, infers Church-communion in all Ordinances, particularly in the Lords Supper, 1 *Cor* 12. 13. and in Voting and Cenſures. 1 *Cor.* 5. 12. Therefore no adult perſon may be received into *mere Membership*, regularly, untill he be qualified fitly for other Ordinances and for Voting and judging in Church-affairs, 1 *Cor.* 5.12. So much for the fourth Propoſition.

"Propoſ. 5. Their fifth Propoſition is: *Church-members,* "*who were admitted in minority, unaerſtanding the Doctrine of* "*Faith, and publickly profeſſing their aſſent thereunto, not ſcan-* "*dalous in life, and ſolemnly owning the Covenant before the* "*Church, whereby they give up themſelves and their children to* "*the Lord, and ſubject themſelves to the Government of Chriſt* "*in the Church, their children are to be baptized.*

Reply.

Reply. This Propoſition agreeth not with our tenth Poſition, where more is declared, from Scripture, to be required unto Church-membership, in reference both to infants and adult perſons, then is here expreſſed. Yet, ſay they, "*This is evident from* "*the Arguments following.* But to him who ſhall duely examine their Arguments by the Light of the Word and Spirit of God, in the New Teſtament, the Propoſition will appear to be not evidenced by them, as we ſhall evince, by the help of Chriſt, in examining the particulars.

"Arg. 1. *Theſe children are partakers of that which is the* "*main ground of baptizing any children whatſoever; and neither the* "*Parents nor the children do put in any barre to hinder it.* This they endeavour to prove in the two parts of it, ſeverally.

"1. *That they partake of that which is the main ground of ba-* "*ptizing any*, they ſay, *is clear; Becauſe intereſt in the Covenant* "*is the main ground of title to Baptiſm: and this infants have.*

Reply. The Parents muſt be fitly qualified before they may be admitted to Covenant with the Lord, and his Church, for themſelves and their children: Elſe the Covenant will be profaned; and ſuch covenanting cannot regularly give them, and their children, an intereſt in the Covenant, and title to Baptiſm. The Parents, or adult perſons, regularly admitted to Covenant, muſt be Believers in Chriſt, effectually called, in the charitable judgement of the Church, judging according to Rule: for to ſuch only, and their ſeed, is the Promiſe, or Covenant, *Act.* 2.39 If the Primitive Churches had not exactly looked for this qualification in the men whom they admitted unto Church-membership, the Apoſtles neither could, nor would have ſtyled thoſe to whom they wrote their Epiſtles, *Beloved of God*, called *Saints*, Rom. 1.7. *Sanctified in Chriſt Jeſus*, 1 Cor. 1.2. *Faithful in Chriſt Jeſus*, Eph 1.1. *Saints in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. 1.1. *The Church which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Theſſ 1.1 which they did not by the judgement of Infallibility, from Divine Revelation, but from the judgement of Charity, from what they heard of them, and ſaw in them, *Rom.* 1.8. 1 *Cor.* 1.4. *Eph.* 1. 15, 16. *Col.* 1.3,4,5. & 2.5. *Phil.* 1.3,5,6,7. 1 *Theſſ.* 1.3,4,5,9. Therefore, whereas they ſay,

" *That a Member, or one in Covenant, as ſuch, is the ſubject of* " *Baptiſm, is further cleared in Propoſ.* 1.

Reply. The light which that Propoſition holdeth forth for clearing this is in one clauſe, which is here omitted, *viz. According to Scripture.* " *They that according to Scripture are Members of the viſible Church, are the ſubjects of Baptiſm*, &c. Now, according to Scripture, the Covenant was differently adminiſtred, in different times of the Church. Under *Abraham* it was adminiſtred by Circumciſion to all that were of his Houſe, and to their ſeed abiding in his Family: For the Church was then onely in *Abrahams* Family, and after him in the Families of *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, until *Moſe*; yet even then the Circumciſion of all Parents did not intereſt their ſeed in the Covenant and firſt Seal of it, as may be ſeen in the Poſterity of *Eſau*, and of *Abraham* himſelf by *Keturah*. 2. Under *Moſes*, it was adminiſtred to the twelve Tribes ſuitably unto that Ceremonial and Typical ſtate of the Church, which was then National, *Deut.* 4. 7, 8. and the Proſelytes, who were then added to them, were to be ordered by the ſame Laws with the People of Iſrael; for, *Acceſſorium ſequitur naturam Principalis.* This adminiſtration of the Covenant was, according to the Scripture of the Old Teſtament, until Chriſt came; under Chriſt, the Covenant is adminiſtred, according to what hath been expreſſed in the Poſitions formerly noted; particularly, the tenth Poſition.

" 2. *That theſe children have intereſt in the Covenant*, they ſay, " *appears*; 1. *Becauſe if the parent be in Covenant, the childe is alſo*, " &c. *But the parents in queſtion are in Covenant*, &c.

Reply. 1. Adde, *According to Goſpel-Rules, given by Chriſt unto Chriſtian Churches for admittance of perſons ſpiritually fit for Church-covenant and communion.* Thus; if Parents be in Covenant, according to Goſpel-Rules, the infant-childe or childe in minority, is ſo alſo; elſe the Propoſition muſt be denied: That being added, the Aſſumption is to be denied. Then, according to that addition it may be granted alſo, that, if the Parent ſtand in the Church, ſo doth the childe in infancy, or minority, among the Gentiles now, as well as among the Jews of old, *Rom.* 11. 16, 20--22. They ſay, " *It is unheard of in Scripture, that the*

" *progreſs*

" *progreſs of the Covenant ſtops at the infant childe.* *Reply.* Nor do we ſay it doth, but at the adult perſon, or Parent, who breaks the Covenant; and that the *progreſs of the Covenant ſtops there* from the children alſo, it is not unheard-of in Scripture: for the Scripture hath told us of the ſtopping of the Covenant in *Iſhmael, Eſau*, and *Abrahams* poſterity by *Keturah*, after they were ſent away from the Church in *Iſaac*'s family. Nor do their Reaſons prove the Aſſumption.

The firſt is, " *Becauſe they were once in Covenant, and never* " *ſince diſcovenanted. If they had not been once in Covenant, they had* " *not warrantably been baptized; and they are ſo ſtill, except in ſome* " *way of God they have been diſcovenanted, caſt out, or cut off, which* " *theſe have not been.*

Reply. 1. If they had not ſpiritual fitneſs for the Covenant, Parents, or adult perſons were not regularly in Covenant, nor are their children in infancy, or minority, warrantably baptized. And, when thoſe infants are grown up, though they have not been diſcovenanted, by being caſt out, or cut off from their Covenant-relation; yet they are diſcovenanted, by their violating their Parents Covenant for them, through their not performing that whereunto they were engaged thereby, in that, when they became adult, they did not regularly enter into Covenant with the Lord and his Church, for themſelves and theirs, as their Parents, if they were godly, did, *Rom.*2 25. 2. Though they ſay, " *Perſons once in Covenant are not broken off from it, according* " *to Scripture, ſave for notorious ſins, and incorrigibleneſs therein,* " *which is not the caſe of theſe Parents.* Yet if they break off themſelves, by breaking the Covenant which was ſealed by Baptiſm in their infancy, or minority; they thereby deprive themſelves of the benefits and priviledges of the Covenant, as it hath been proved. And, in ſuch a caſe, they are to be looked at, like thoſe of whom *John* ſpeaks, 1 *Joh.*2.19.

" 2. *Becauſe the tenour of the Covenant is to the faithful* " *and their ſeed after them in their generations*, Gen.17.7. *even* " *to a thouſand generations*, i.e. *conditionally, provided that the Pa-* " *rents ſucceſſively do continue to be keepers of the Covenant*, Exod. " 20 6. Deut.7.9,11. Pſal.105.8. *which the Parents in queſtion*

are,

" *are, becauſe they are not (in Scripture account in this caſe) forſakers* " *or rejecters of the God and Covenant of their fathers: ſee* Deut. " 29.25,26. 2 Kings 17.15-- 20 2 Chron. 7.22. Deut 7.10.

Reply. 1. The tenour of the Covenant in Gen. 17.7 had (as it hath been formerly noted) a ſpecial reſpect unto *Iſaac* v. 19. for in *Iſaac* was *Abrahams* ſeed to be called, Gen. 21.12. *So the children of the fleſh are not the children of God, but the children of the promiſe are accounted for the ſeed*, Rom. 9.8. The ſealing of this Covenant to the Poſterity of *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, by Circumciſion, was to continue throughout their generations, till the coming of Chriſt. The Covenant in the tenour of it, is, for ſubſtance, the ſame to us as it was to them (though the outward Signs and manner of diſpenſing it, differ) it being eſtabliſhed by the blood of Chriſt, *Luke* 1.69,72,73. *Heb.* 13.20. The extending the Covenant *to a thouſand generations*, themſelves ſay, is *conditional, provided that the Parents ſucceſſively do continue to be keepers of the Covenant*. Such a ſucceſſion in the Covenant, through Faith, is not to be found even in the beſt Churches that ever were in the world for a thouſand, or an hundred generations: But ſuch the Parents in queſtion are not. For though they are not ſuch forſakers and rejecters of God, and the Covenant of their fathers, as they who are ſpoken of in *Deut.* 29 25 26 2 *Kings* 17. 15 -- 20 2 *Chron.* 7.22. Yet, beſides that groſs Idolatry, there is a ſpiritual Idolatry, in ſcandalous Covetouſneſs, *Coloſſ* 3.5. and Worldly-mindedneſs whereby men forſake and reject God and his Covenant, to ſerve the World, *Matt* 6.24. 1 *Tim.* 6.17. 1 *Joh.* 2.15. to theſe, the text alledged by them in *Deut* 7.10. may fitly be applied; and they forſake the Covenant of God, as *Dan.* 4. and ſuch may they be, who anſwer all the terms of their fifth Propoſition, externally and viſibly. Now, the Religion of ſuch is no better then that of the *Shechemites*, who took upon them the Religion of the Jews and were circumciſed only for worldly ends, *Gen* 34.22,23,24. Such Religion will end in Apoſtacy, in times of Perſecution for the Truth, *Matt.* 13 21.

" 2. *That the Parents in queſtion do not put a barre to hinder their* " *children from Baptiſm*, they ſay, *is plain from the words of the* " *Propoſition*, &c.

Reply.

Reply. 1. Notwithſtanding what is ſaid in the Propoſition, Parents may put a bar to hinder their children from being baptized regularly. A man may do and be all that is there required, yet have no Faith in Chriſt, but be an unregenerate perſon; and that will put a bar to hinder himſelf and his infant-ſeed from entring into the Kingdome of God, *Joh.* 3. 3,5. and, by conſequence, from the Seal of entrance. 2. Nor can they prove that all adult perſons, whom they admit into perſonal and immediate Membership, are ſuch as the Propoſition deſcribeth. For, I demand, Doth every all underſtand the Doctrine of Faith? What courſe do they take to know it? If they do not, their publickly profeſſing their aſſent thereunto, is a meer mockery. A Parret-like ſaying the Doctrine of Faith, and an ignorant aſſent thereunto, may juſtly be a bar of groſs Ignorance, Atheiſm, and Infidelity, and Hypocriſie. *Faith* brought the Eunuch to underſtand what he read, before it could become a word of faith to him, *Act.* 8. 2. Nor is literal underſtanding what they aſſent to, ſufficient to remove all bars: Theſe the Devils do, *Jam.* 2. 19. *a right manner of knowing and aſſenting*, muſt be added. Such a manner of knowing, whereby the Church may judge that Chriſt is let into the Soul. As Reverend Mr. *Hooker* was wont to ſay, *Such a profeſſed Aſſent, as hath a profeſſed Conſent joyned with it*, *Iſa.* 1. 10. Such a manner of knowing and conſenting, as produceth Obedience flowing from Faith: which is the next end of the Miniſtery of the Goſpel, *Rom.* 1. 5. & 16. 26. Elſe, *they are deſpiſers, and unbelieving, to whom nothing is pure, but even their minde and conſcience is defiled, who profeſs that they know God, but in their works they deny him*, Tit 1. 15 16. 3 And though they are not ſcandalous in life, but *ſolemnly own the Covenant before the Church, wherein they give up themſelves and their children to the Lord, and ſubject themſelves to the Government of Chriſt in his Church*; yet all theſe may be affirmed of many *who have a form of godlineſs, but deny the power thereof: From ſuch, Paul* (who taught him how he ought to *behave himſelf in the Houſe of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of Truth*, 1 Tim. 3. 15.) warned *Timothy* to *turn away*, 2 Tim. 3. 5! 4. But are all the adult perſons, whom they admit into Member-

ſhip, ſuch as the Propoſition deſcribes? Do they take a right courſe to know they are ſuch? 1. *That they are not ſcandalous in life:* What teſtimony or certain knowledge have they, that the Church may confide in, that they frequent not looſe and vain Company in diſorderly Night-meeting, at unſeaſonable hours, and in ſuſpected places, in unwarrantable Gamings and Drinkings, &c? not to ſpeak of other evils. 2 How do they *Solemnly own the Covenant before the Church?* when ſome of them having publickly ſaid, They do own it; being afterward asked in private, What is the Covenant which you owned? anſwered, I do not know. 3. As for their *Subjecting themſelves to the Government of Chriſt in the Church*; Do they orderly ſubmit to the Government of their Family-Governours, Parents and Maſters, &c? If the Church know not that, How can they expect that they will really ſubject themſelves to Chriſt's Government in the Church? Yea, if they have not been *weary and heavy loaden*, and then came unto Chriſt, they are not fit to take his yoke and burthen upon them, *Matth.* 11.28,29. I proceed to their ſecond Argument.

" Arg. 2. *The children of the Parents in queſtion are either children of the Covenant, or ſtrangers from the Covenant; either holy or unclean, either within the Church or without, either ſuch as have God for their God, or without God in the world. But he that conſidereth the Propoſition, will not affirm the latter concerning theſe children: and the former being granted, infers their right to Baptiſm.*

Reply. The more ſeriouſly I conſider their Propoſition, the leſs I finde in it, to evince the former, and the more, to conclude the latter; *viz.* That if a man have no more then the Propoſition holds forth, he may be a ſtranger from the Covenant, unclean, and without the Church, in Scripture account *Rom.* 9 6,7 8. and without God in the world, through want of faith in Chriſt, whereby the heart is purified, and men have an intereſt in Chriſt, and in God through Chriſt.

" Arg. 3. *To deny the Propoſition, would be* 1. *To ſtraiten the grace of Chriſt in the Goſpel-diſpenſation,* &c. 2. *To render the children of the Jews, when they ſhall be called, in a worſe condition*

then

" *then under legal Administrations, contrary to* Jer. 30 10. Ezek. 37.
" 25,26. 3. *To deny the application of the initiatory Seal to such*
" *as regularly stand in the Church and Covenant,* &c. 4. *To break*
" *Gods Covenant, by denying the initiatory Seal to those that are in*
" *covenant*, Gen. 17.9,10,14.

Reply. The contrary to all, and every one of these, is true. For, 1. It enlargeth the Grace of Christ in the Gospel-dispensation by shewing that Christian Churches are in a more spiritual and gracious frame and state, then the Jews of old were, under Legal Dispensations: which therefore are not continued and propagated by a natural succession, as that National Church was, but by Gods *calling them with an holy calling, according to his purpose and grace*, 2 Tim. 1.9. and adding thereby to the Christian Church *such as*, in their charitable judgement, *shall be saved*, Acts 2.43. 2. It declareth that the state of the Jews, when they shall be called, will be far better then it was under Legal Dispensations, yea, then the condition of the Gentiles is now. For, under the Law, their light and holiness was defective, and Christian Churches now, how careful soever they be in point of admittance, cannot avoid the creeping in of Hypocrites: but the Jews, when they shall be called, shall have a far greater measure of light and holiness then was to be found in former ages of the Churches, and all the Members of the *New Jerusalem* shall be Elect, they and their children successively; and no Hypocrite shall be mingled with them, *Rev.* 21. & 22. 3. Nor doth the denial of the Proposition, infer a denial of the application of the initiatory Seal to such as stand regularly in the Church and Covenant: but the contrary. 4. Nor doth it break Gods Covenant, by denying Baptism to such as are regularly in Covenant. These are Accusations without Proof.

" Arg. 4. *Confederate visible Believers, though but in the lowest*
" *degree, such are to have their children baptized: But the Parents in*
" *question are confederate visible Believers, at least in some degree.*

Reply. The *major* being granted, the *minor* is denied. For, 1. All that is said in the Proposition, may be affirmed of sundry that have not visible saving Faith in Christ, in the lowest degree. Therefore these are no sufficient grounds for charity to account them Believers in Christ, in the least degree. Let them that are

to be admitted into Membership, by their personal right, shew how Faith was wrought, and how it works in them, in the lowest degree: then the Church will have some ground for their charitable judgement concerning their fitness for regular Church-membership and communion. 2. Nor are the children of the godly, qualified but as the persons in the Propositions, said to be fait ful in *Tit.* 1.6. whether we understand that Text in a Moral, or Spiritual sense: The first, is a fruit of Moral Principles and Education; these are short of the qualifications in the Proposition: The second, is a fruit of the Spirit *Gal.* 5.22. These are Believers in Christ, *Acts* 16. 15. 3 Epist *Joh.* ver. 5. and are qualified above what the Proposition requireth. 3. They say, "*Children of the Covenant, as the Parents in question are, have fre-*"*quently the beginnings of grace wrought in them in younger years:* "*Hence this sort of persons, shewing nothing to the contrary, are in cha-*"*rity, or to Ecclesiastical reputation, visible Believers.*

Rpl. 1 It remains to be proved, that the Parents in question are children of the Covenant: They were children of the Covenant in their infancy and minority, and bound thereby, when they became adult, to covenant for themselves and their seed, in their own persons, being fitly qualified, as their godly Parents did before them: If they, being grown up to be men, perform not this Covenant, they cannot fitly be called *Children of the Covenant*, but *Transgressours of the Covenant, and Breakers of it.* 2. The Argument is fallacious: Some children of the Covenant have had the *beginnings of grace manifestly wrought in them in younger years. Therefore all persons of this sort, shewing nothing to the contrary, are, in charity, or to Ecclesiastical reputation, visible Believers.* This Argument is to be denied: both because it argues from some Particulars, to infer a General affirmatively; and from that which is positively manifest, in some, to prove the same to be in others, in whom it is not positively manifest, but only they shew nothing to the contrary: which makes them at best but Negative Christians, which is not to be Christian indeed.

"4. They say, *They that are regularly in the Church (as the*"*Parents in question are) are visible Saints: for the Church is in*"*Scripture account) a company of Saints,* 1 Cor. 14. 33. & 1. 2.

Reply.

Rel. Both their Aſſertion, and their Proof of it, are to be denied. 1 The Aſſertion is not true, that the Parents in queſtion are regularly in the Church. Infants and children in minority of confederate Believers, are in the Church, by their Parents covenanting for them, 1 Cor. 7. 4. But Parents are not regularly in the Church, till, being fitly qualified they confederate for themſelves, and their children under age, *Acts* 2. 39 being qualified according to that Propheſie concerning the ſeaſons of the Goſpel, in *Is.* 56. 6, 7. 2. The Proof is not appoſite: for, *Paul* wrote that Epiſtle to the adult Members regularly admitted unto full communion with the Church at *Corinth*, whom he ſtyleth, *Sanctified in Chriſt Jeſus*, 1 Cor. 1. 2. and ſuch were they of whom he ſpeaks *in all the Churches of the Saints*, 1 Cor. 14. 33. But the Parents in queſtion, being *meer Members*, not in full communion, are not regularly approved of the Church to be ſuch. Therefore this concerns not them.

"5. They ſay, *Being in Covenant, and baptized, they have* "*Faith and Repentance indefinitely given to them in the Promiſe, and* "*ſealed in Baptiſm*, Deut. 30. 6. *which continues valid, and ſo a var-* "*lid teſtimony for them, while they do not reject it.*

Reply. Reverend Mr. *Cotton* was wont to ſay, *Elect children have the grace of the Covenant*, viz *Faith and Repentance* &c. *given to them, in and by the Covenant, and ſealed by Baptiſm*, Deut. 30. 6. *but the reſt have onely the Covenant of Grace, for external means of grace, given in the Promiſe, and ſealed by Baptiſm, till they reject them.* This teſtimony is true, and this diſtinction is grounded upon Scripture, *Rom.* 11 7. and it is neceſſary, to prevent that Opinion of *Univerſal Baptiſm-Grace*, which the *Arminians* improve to eſtabliſh their dangerous Errour of the *final and total Apoſtacy of the Saints from Grace.* But God, who hath promiſed, is faithful, and will do according to his Promiſe, working effectually in the Elect, in his appointed time, the grace promiſed in the Covenant, ſo powerfully that they ſhall not reject it; the reſt ſhall have the outward means of Grace, according to his Promiſe, till they reject them, as *Eſau* did. To theſe, Faith and Repentance are not indefinitely given in the Promiſe, and ſealed by outward Baptiſm; as neither was it given in the Promiſe, and ſealed by outward Cir-

cumciſion indefinitely to thoſe who, when they became adult, brake the Covenant. Whereupon *Paul* diſtinguiſhed the Jews and Circumciſion, *Rom.* 2. 28 29. and anſwerable thereunto is *Peters* diſtinction of Baptiſm 1 *Pet.* 3. 24. Therefore ſuch as reject the offers of Grace as all that living under the means of Grace remain unbelievers, do *Mat.* 23. 37. cannot be ſaid to have Faith and Repentance indefinitely given to them in the Promiſe, in that ſenſe, wherein that phraſe is uſed in 2 *Pet.* 1. 4.

" They adde, *Yet it doth not neceſſarily follow, that theſe perſons* " *are immediately fit for the Lords Supper*, &c.

Reply. If they have Faith and Repentance given them under Gods Hand in the Covenant, and ſealed by Baptiſm; and if they do ſo receive them, that it continues valid; and ſo a valid teſtimony for them: What can hinder regularly ſuch Church-members from partaking of the Lords Supper, &c? They ſay, " *Becauſe, though they are in a latitude of expreſſion, to be accounted* " *viſible Believers, or* in numero fidelium, *as even infants in covenant* " *are, yet they want that ability of examining themſelves, and that* " *ſpecial exerciſe of Faith, which is requiſite to that Ordinance, as was* " *ſaid upon the fourth Propoſition.*

Reply. 1. *If any man ſpeak, let him ſpeak as the Oracles of God,* 1 *Pet.* 4. 11. The New Teſtament no where alloweth that latitude of ſpeech, to call men viſible Believers, who never were regularly joyned to that number, nor fitly qualified to take hold of the Covenant perſonally for themſelves and their children. 2. Nor can they be accounted Believers, or in the number of Believers, as infants are, who are looked at onely as in their Parents Covenant, being not capable of covenanting for themſelves, as men are: So that there is not *par ratio* between them. 3. Viſible want of ability to examine themſelves, and of that ſpecial exerciſe of Faith which is requiſite to that Ordinance, argues a viſible want of that Faith which is to be examined and exerciſed, and is a juſt bar to the admittance of ſuch into immediate and perſonal Church-membership, as well as to the Lords Supper, &c.

" Arg. 5: *The denial of Baptiſm to the children in queſtion, hath* " *a dangerous tendency to Irreligion and Apoſtacy; becauſe it denies*

them

"them, and ſo the children of the Church ſucceſſively, to have any "part in the Lord, which is the way to make them ceaſe from fearing "the Lord, Joſh. 22.24,25.

Reply. The children in queſtion, are children of Parents who are not members in full communion with the Church, and ſo not regularly perſonal Members. If ſuch & their children, be denied to have any part in the Lord, it is the degenerate Parents, not the Churches fault. They who are not in Church-communion, cannot regularly communicate unto their infant-ſeed a right and title to Baptiſm, which is the firſt viſible Seal of Church-communion, 1 Cor. 12.13. 2. It is not true, that the Churches denying Baptiſm to the children in queſtion, is a denial of the children of the Church to have any part in the Lord; for ſuch are not, according to Scripture Rules, children of the Church ſucceſſively: for the Parents have cut off the Entail of the Covenant from themſelves and their ſeed, by their not confederating for themſelves and theirs regularly. 3. That *this denial has a dangerous tendency to Irreligion and Apoſtacy*, is not proved by them, nor can be. That Text in Joſh. 22.24,25. ſpeaks nothing for their advantage in this caſe; for the men there ſpoken of, were Members in full communion with the Church of Iſrael, and their children, when they were grown up, were joyned in Covenant perſonally, and immediately with the Lord and his Church, by a ſolemn Covenant, every third year, Deut. 26.17,18. which was to continue in Canaan, throughout their generations, till the coming of Chriſt. So that they had a part in the Lord ſucceſſively, from which if they had been excluded cauſleſly, it might have caused their children to ceaſe from fearing the Lord. But Chriſt hath not appointed any ſuch Ordinance, to continue ſuch a ſucceſſion in Chriſtian Churches under the Goſpel. Therefore the Text in Joſhua doth nothing at all concern the children of Parents in queſtion.

The tendency of the following Diſcourſe is to prove, that "*The owning of the children of theſe that ſucceſſively continue in Co-*"*venant to be a part of the Church, is ſo far from being deſtructive* "*to the purity and proſperity of the Church, and Religion therein, that* "*this imputation belongs to the contrary Tenent.*

Reply.

Reply. They, who ſo conceive, have ſuch grounds of that perſwaſion, as will not eaſily be removed nor are ſo much as ſhaken by any thing ſaid in their Book. I willingly grant, that *to ſeek to be more holy than the Rule, will ever end in impurity in the iſſue*: but that cannot be truly applied to thoſe who conceive herein according to Goſpel Rules. Let them alſo grant, that to increaſe, continue, and propagate Churches under the Goſpel, by means not ordained by Chriſt under the New Teſtament, but oppoſite thereunto, is to gather without Chriſt, which will ever end in ſcattering in the iſſue, and then, What will become of the purity and proſperity of Chriſtian Churches? It is true, that the frame of the Covenant runs, *To us, and to our ſeed after us in their generations*; but it muſt be underſtood and applied ſuitably to the different conſtitution of Churches, under different adminſtrations of the Covenant, under the Old Teſtament, and under the Goſpel.

"They ſay, that, *To keep in the Line, and under the influence "and efficacy of this Covenant of God, is the true way to the Church-"ches glory.*

Reply. It is indeed the Churches glory to keep in the Line, and under the influence and efficacy of this Covenant, ſucceſſively, when the Spirit, as a free Agent, brings any into that Line, and under that efficacy of the Covenant by ſucceſſion in Faith, as he did *Eunice* the Grandmother, and *Eunice* the Daughter, and *Timothy* her Grandchilde, 2 *Tim.* 1. 5. That is the only true Goſpel ſucceſſion, when it is made viſible to the Churches charitable judgment, according to Goſpel Rules. But that cannot be done, by ſetting up ſuch a *Meer Membership* in Chriſtian Churches, whereby the infants ſhall be baptized, by a right derived to them from Parents, who are not in full communion with the Church by their perſonal Membership. What influence and efficacy hath the Covenant upon ſuch Parents as are in ſuch a Membership, wherein the Church judgeth them unfit for communion? and that, not for any Scandal given by them, after their admiſſion, but for the nature of their *Meer Membership*. To diſavow ſuch a Membership, is ſo far from cutting off the proſperity of *Sion*, and from hindring it from being, as in the moſt glorious times it

ſhall

ſhall be, *An eternal Excellency, and the joy of many generations*, that this imputation belongs to the contrary Tenent, which is here aſſerted.

But they argue; "*This progreſs of the Covenant eſtabliſheth the* "*Church*, Deut. 29.13. Jer 30.20. *Therefore the contrary doth diſ-* "*eſtabliſh it.*

Reply. The Argument is to be denied. For, it will not follow, that, if God did eſtabliſh the Church of the Jews, before the coming of Chriſt, by ſuch a ſucceſſive progreſs of the Covenant in *Deut.* 29.13. therefore he doth ſo now. As for the place *Jer.* 30 20. where it is ſaid, that *the children of the Jews ſhall be as aforetime*; it is meant only of their outward condition, that it ſhall be as good as before the Captivity. See *Engl. Annotat.* This place then is impertinent to Circumciſion or Baptiſm. But there is a manifeſt difference between the conſtitution of theſe Churches. The Church of the Jews before Chriſt, was, for the matter of it, of the Iſraelites deſcended from *Jacob*, by ſucceſſive natural propagation; yet this ſucceſſive progreſs of the Covenant, did not then eſtabliſh the whole Church of Iſrael in the twelve Tribes: for the ten Tribes fell off under *Jeroboam*, and never returned again. The Church of the Jews that ſhall be under the *New Jeruſalem*, muſt conſiſt, for the matter of it, of Elect and Sincere Believers onely, both they and their children ſucceſſively to the end of the world, according to the Propheſies in *Iſa.* 60.15. & 50.21. *Jer.* 32.39. Ezek. 37. 25---28. *Pſal.* 102.16,28. and ſundry other places. But Chriſtian Churches among the Gentiles now are conſtituted of viſible Believers, for the matter of them, among whom ſundry cloſe Hypocrites creep in. The progreſs of the Covenant in them, by Chriſts Ordinance, is thus far ſucceſſive, that the children in minority of confederate viſible Believers ſhall be baptized, and thereby bound, when they become adult, to perform the Covenant in their own perſons, and to confederate for themſelves and theirs, as their godly Parents did before them: which if they do not, thoſe Parents by their degeneracy ſtop the ſucceſſive progreſs of the Covenant: In which caſe, Chriſt doth not allow the Churches to provide for a ſucceſſion, by ſetting up a *Meer Membership* of adult perſons, that are viſibly unfit for Church-com-

munion in all Ordinances. Such irregular bringing of men into Membership, will unavoidably bring in the corrupting of Religion, which will end in Apostacy. There be better wayes to convey Religion down to after-generations, and to continue a *Nursery in Christs Vineyard*, then this way of setting up such a successive Membership, which Christ hath not sanctified by his Institution; *viz.* The vigilancy and faithful care and endeavour of Church Elders, and Family-Rulers, to fit them for regular Church-fellowship, in the using of all suitable means, with fervent Prayer to God in Jesus Christ for his blessing upon the same, leaving the issue to his All-disposing wisdome, *who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will*; according whereunto, he with-holdeth from, and addeth unto the Church whom he will, *Acts* 5.13. & 2.47. Nor can I but marvel how it comes to pass, that they who seem to approve Mr. *Cottons Treatise of the Holiness of Church-Members*, (which indeed is worthy to be highly approved) do act as they do, in setting up such a *Meer Membership* of adult persons (as hath no agreement with his description) who are far from personal holiness: The young people of this Countrey, yea, the children of Church-members generally, as well as others, being commonly known to be Profane, Vain, Licentious, Vicious, Disobedient to Parents, Unfaithful to Masters, Stubborn, Proud, Self-willed, and yet these shall be accepted into immediate personal Membership, whereby they become Covenanters for themselves and theirs; to whom the Lord justly saith, as in *Psa.*50. 16, to 23. *What hast thou to do to take my Covenant into thy mouth?*

Obj. *They have the more need to be under the Watch, Discipline, and Government of the Church.*

Answ. Their unfitness for such an holy Fellowship, as Christian Churches are, being so manifest, how can it be rationally expected that they who submit not themselves to the Yoke of Family-Government, will orderly submit themselves to Christs Yoke in Church-censures? But, as the admission of such is without due regard to their Spiritual fitness; so the application of Church-censures to them, will be disregarded and slighted by them. The Churches will have trouble enough with them, and dis-

diſhonour, and infection, and diſturbance by them, without any acceptance with God, who will ſay, *Who hath required theſe things at your hands?* and without any bleſſed fruit, either to the Church, or to ſuch *Meer Members*. For, God limits his Bleſſing to his own Appointments. When *Uzzah put forth his hand to take hold of the Ark of God (for the Oxen ſhook it) the anger of the Lord was kindled againſt Uzzah, and he made a breach upon Uzzah*, 2 *Sam.*6.6,7,8. becauſe *they ſought not the Lord in the due order*, 1 *Chron.*15.2,13. The application is eaſie. I proceed to examine their ſixth Argument.

" Arg. 6. *The Parents in queſtion are perſonal, immediate, and* " *yet-continuing Members of the Church.* This they endeavour to prove in the terms ſeverally. " 1. *That they are perſonal Mem-* " *bers, or Members in their own perſons, appears,* 1. *Becauſe they* " *are perſonally holy.* 2. *Becauſe they are perſonally baptized.* " 3. *They are perſonally liable to Church-cenſures.* 4. *They are* " *perſonally, by means of the Covenant, in a viſible ſtate of Salvation.* " 5. *When they commit iniquity, they perſonally break the Cove-* " *nant.*

Reply. The Argument hath *Parents* for its Subject, but moſt of the Proofs belong onely to *Infants*; *viz.* three of them; the other two belong onely to adult perſons, regularly admitted into Church-memberſhip, which therefore doth not concern the Parents in queſtion. There are two ſorts of Church-members, and both are accounted holy: 1. *Children of Confederates in their minority*, whoſe right to Memberſhip is from their relation to confederate Parents covenanting for them; whence they are holy, 1 *Cor.*7.14. though not in their perſons, yet fœderally & relatively. 2. Are Baptized, though in their perſons, yet by and for their Parents covenanting for them, being incapable of covenanting for themſelves. 3. They are *perſonally under Diſcipline, and liable to Church-cenſures in their own perſons.* This is anſwered before, when the third Propoſition was examined. 4. By *means of the Covenant, their perſons are in a viſible ſtate of Salvation*; while nothing appears to the contrary 2. *Adult perſons*, whoſe Memberſhip is founded in their own perſonal Faith, made viſible to the regular ſatisfaction of the Church. To theſe the other two

properties do agree: 1. That *they are personally under Discipline, and liable to Church-censures in their own persons.* See Propos 3. examined. 2. *When they personally commit iniquity, they personally break the Covenant.* This is not proved concerning infants, nor can be; for that in *Ier.* 11.2,10. is spoken by the Prophet to the men of *Iudah:* so that in *Ezek.* 16.

" 2. They say, that *Children are immediate Members, as to* " *the essence of Membership*; i. e. *they themselves in their own per-* " *sons are the immediate Subjects of this Adjunct, Membership,* " *though they came to it by means of their Parents covenanting.* This, " they say, *appears by like Reasons* as the former.

Reply. By what is answered to the former, it appears, that personal Membership is of two sorts; 1. *Purely*, or *meerly Personal*; such is the Membership of adult persons regularly admitted: for their Membership is both *subjectively*, and *formally* personal, by their orderly covenanting for themselves. 2. *Mixtly Personal*; such is the Membership of the infants and children in minority of confederate Parents. For their Membership is onely *subjectively Personal*, but *formally Relative*, by their Parents covenanting for them, they being unable to covenant for themselves. To apply this to childrens Membership, which they unfitly style *Immediate:* I say, *unfitly*; for two things are requisite to the denominating of a *Member*, Mediate or Immediate. 1. *To an Immediate Member*, that his Membership arise 1. From his personal Faith, made visible to the Church. 2. From his personal Confederating with the Lord and his Church, for himself and his seed. Such an one is an *Immediate Member*, because his Membership is from himself, as well as in himself. 2. *To a Mediate Member*, 1. That is Membership ariseth, not from his personal Faith made visible to the Church, whereof he is not capable, but from his believing confederate Parents. 2. That it is from such Parents covenanting for him. Such an one is a *Mediate Member*, because his Membership, though it is *subjectively* in himself, yet it is *relatively* from his Parents. Whence it will follow, that this kinde of Membership is peculiar to such infants and children in minority, onely during their non-age. This distinction of *Mediate* and *Immediate Church-members*, the Writers

of

of that Book exagitate cauſleſly, ſaying, " *As touching that* " *diſtinction of Mediate and Immediate, as applied to Membership,* " *(which ſome urge) we are to diſtinguiſh* 1. *Between the Efficient and* " *Eſſence of Membership.* 2. *Between the Inſtrumental Efficient* " *and Means thereof, which is the Parents profeſſion and covenant-* " *ing, and the Principal Efficient, which is Divine Inſtitution. They* " *may be ſaid to be mediate (or rather mediately) members, as they* " *become members by means of their Parents covenanting, as an in-* " *ſtrumental cauſe thereof.*

Reply. I look at believing confederate Parents, not as the inſtrumental, but as the procreant cauſe, as of the childes natural being, by his generating him; ſo alſo of his Church-membership, by his confederating for him, and this by Gods Inſtitution: therefore I chuſe rather to call him a *mediate member*, then to ſay he is a *member immediately*; to ſhew, that the childes Membership differs from the Parents *ſpecifically*, or in the kinde of Membership. For, the childes Membership is *Relative*, in it Eſſence, though *Perſonal*, in its Subject; which doth vary the Eſſence, or Nature of it, from the Parents, which is both in its Eſſence and Subject *meerly Perſonal*. *Divine Inſtitution* giveth a *real*, and *mixtly perſonal membership* to ſuch children by their Parents covenanting for them, as the *immediate procreant cauſe of their membership*, whereby the children become mediate Members, *i. e. mediante Parentum fœdere*, which gives Being to the Membership of ſuch children, and differenceth it from the Membership of adult perſons. *Divine Inſtitution*, though it doth not make every Parent a *Publick Perſon*, againſt which Title I excepted in my *firſt Eſſay*, and whereunto I finde no Anſwer here: Yet it makes ſuch Parents Covenant to be Obligatory to ſuch children, and the Parents act in covenanting for the childe, to be the childes act *interpretatively*, not *formally*, ſo as to make the childe an immediate Member thereby.

" They adde, *Hence the Eſſence of membership*, i. e. *Covenant-* " *intereſt, or a place and portion within the viſible Church, is really,* " *properly, perſonally and immediately the portion of the childe by Divine Gift and Grant*, Joſh. 22. 25, 27.

Reply. The intereſt in the Covenant, and thereby *a place and*

portion in the visible Church, is twofold: 1. *A Childes interest and portion*; which is in and by the Parents covenanting for him, and so is mediate. 2. *A Mans interest and portion*; which is by his own covenanting for himself and his childe, and so is immediate. Though nothing comes between to sever the *Adjunct* from the *Subject*; *The Childe*, from *A portion in the Lord*: yet something comes between to bring that *Adjunct* and *Subject* together; *viz. The Parents covenanting for the Childe*; which if it did not come between, they would be severed, as they are in other children, who have no such portion in the Lord, through their want of such Parents to covenant for them. Therefore the Membership of the Infants of confederates is truly and properly said to be mediate.

"*Again, though their visible ingraffing into Christ the Head, and* "*so into the Church his Body, is sealed in their Baptism*: and though "*in ingraffing, nothing comes between the graft and the stock; Their* "*union is immediate.*

Reply. Yet it will not follow, that *they are immediate members of the visible Church*: For, the union between Christ and the Church, and all visible Church-members, is not properly, but Metaphorically called *Ingraffing*, because there is some similitude of this Spiritual Union in Material and Corporal Ingraffing. Now similitudes do not run on four feet (as we commonly say) it sufficeth that they agree in the main point of Union: Whether that Spiritual Union, which is likened to corporal ingraffing of a graft to the stock of a Tree, be mediate, as that of confederate Infants is, or immediate, as that of Parents and adult persons is; both may be called *Ingraffing*, in respect of the event, which the Apostle notes in *Rom.* 11.17. that *both, together with other branches or members, partake of the root and fatness of the Olive-tree*, suitably to their union with it. Mediate Members, as Infants, and children in minority, partake of Baptism, and the special Instruction, Prayers, Blessing, and Watch of the Church, by their Parents covenanting for them: But Parents and adult persons, being immediate Members by their personal covenanting for themselves and their seed, partake of the *root and fatness of the Olive-tree*, in all Ordinances, as, *The Lords Supper, and liberty of*

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Voting in all Church-affairs; and are liable to Church-cenſures immediately in their own perſons. *Paul* knew no ſuch *meer membership* as they ſet up, who ſhall by their perſonal Membership be under the Watch, Diſcipline, and Cenſures of the Church, and have their children Baptized, but not partake of other Priviledges together with other adult Members, no offence intervening after their admiſſion to put them under Church-cenſure, and ſo to debar them regularly as delinquent Members, from full communion. So that this Text makes nothing for them in the caſe of Infants, but much againſt them, in the caſe of adult perſons *meer Membership*. Nor doth that Text in *Deut* 29.11. prove that the *little children* were immediate Members of the Church of Iſrael ſo as their Parents were. And though *to be in Covenant, is the* formalis ratio *of a Church-member*; yet it will not thence follow, that every Covenantee doth covenant immediately for himſelf; nor that every Member of the Church is an immediate Member.

"They ſay, *To act in Covenant, is but the inſtrumental means* "*of membership, and yet children are not without this neither. For the act of the Parent (their publick perſon) is accounted theirs, and they are ſaid to enter into Covenant*, Deut.29.11,12.

Reply. The Parents acting in Covenant for their Infant-ſeed, hath been before proved to be the *Procreant cauſe* of the childes Membership: not are the children ſaid to *enter into Covenant*, *Deut.*29.11. otherwiſe then in and by their Parents Covenant. Yet, as if all they have ſaid were clear, they demand,

"*What is it that children want unto a actual, compleat, proper,* "*abſolute, and immediate Membership*, &c. *Is it Covenant-intereſt,* "*which is the* formalis ratio *of membership? No, they are in Cove-*"*nant. Is it Divine Grant and Inſtitution, which is the Principal* "*Efficient? No, he hath clearly declared himſelf, that he grants unto* "*the children of his people a portion in his Church, and appoints them* "*to be members thereof. Is it an act of Covenanting, which is the* "*Inſtrumental Means? No; they have this alſo reputatively, by* "*Divine Appointment, making the Parent a publick perſon, and* "*accounting them to Covenant in his covenanting.*

Reply. All that they have here expreſſed, doth not ſupply what

what is wanting to little children, to inveſt them with an *actual, compleat, proper, abſolute, and immediate membership.* For, though they are in Covenant, which is the *formalis ratio* of their Membership, yet it is mediately, (i. e. *mediante Parentum fœdere*) and ſo their Membership is mediate. 2. Divine Inſtitution grants unto the little children of his people ſuch a portion in his Church as they are capable of, during their minority, and appoints them to be ſuch Members, as ſuch covenanting of Parents for them can make them. 3. This Divine Inſtitution makes their Parents Undertakers for ſuch children, and them bound, by their Parents acting, to perform that Covenant, when they ſhall become capable, and when they grow fit, to covenant with the Lord and his people for themſelves and theirs, and ſo to be regularly, in their own perſons, by their perſonal act, immediate Members. So that there is wanting unto children in minority, *to make them actual, compleat, proper, abſolute, and immediate Members,* A perſonal fitneſs in themſelves, to act in orderly covenanting for themſelves, which is required in all adult perſons unto immediate Membership. When one comes to be in Covenant in one way, and other in another way; though both are in Covenant, yet theſe different wayes makes their being in the Covenant different, and ſo their Membership. He that comes to be in the Covenant by his own immediate acting, is an immediate Member: He that comes into it by anothers acting for him, is a mediate Member. For, though we are as truly, perſonally, and immediately Members of the Body of faln Mankinde, and by Nature Heirs of Condemnation, as *Adam* was, though he came to it by his own perſonal act, and we by the act of our publick perſon; yet that doth not ſuit the caſe of Infants in queſtion: for, 1. *Adam* ſtood as a publick perſon, in whoſe loyns all Mankinde were under the firſt Covenant, and to be happy or condemned, by his ſtanding or falling. No Parent is ſuch a publick perſon covenanting for all his Poſterity, but for his Infants, and children in minority, while they are ſuch, leaving his adult children to Covenant for themſelves, if he hath any ſuch children, when himſelf enters into Covenant. 2. *Adams* Covenant was onely with the Lord, not with any Church, as the Co-

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venant of co. federate Parents is; and therefore, if *Adam* had ſtood, his poſterity had not been Church-members thereby, as the infants of Church-confederates. 3. Nor doth the Parents breaking his Covenant, make his children Heirs of Condemnation, as *Adams* did all Mankinde. So that this example of *Adam* is impertinently produced in this caſe of infants, and their Parents confederating for them, not as their publick perſon, but as Undertakers for their infant-ſeed by Gods Inſtitution. Nor indeed is any to be accounted a publick perſon, as *Adam* was, but Jeſus Chriſt, for all that are in him, *Rom.*5. 14, to 20. Nor doth their ſimilitude of *a Prince giving Lands to a man and his heirs ſucceſſively, while they continue loyal*, ſuit the caſe in queſtion, concerning Infants, who cannot be viſibly diſloyal; nor that, concerning adult perſons not regularly joyned to the Church, as immediate Members, whoſe Parents were godly when they covenanted for them in their infancy. For, they have cut off the Entail of the Covenant from themſelves and their Poſterity, by their perſonal diſloyalty: ſo that nothing is given to them and theirs by their Covenant which they preſume to uſurp, without warrant from God. They ſay true, that " *A member is one, who, according to* " *Rule* (*or according to divine Inſtitution*) *is within the viſible Church*: But that refutes nothing that I have ſaid, concerning mediate and immediate Members; for both are within the Church according to Rule and Divine Inſtitution, though both have not full communion with the Church in all Ordinances, which is the priviledge of all adult perſons, who are immediate Members by their own perſonal right, 1 *Cor.*5.12. They frame an Objection thus:

" Obj. *If children be compleat and immediate members as their* " *Parents are, then they ſhall immediately have all Church-priviledges* " *as their Parents have, without any further act or qualification.* And they Anſwer it thus: " Anſ. *It followeth not. All priviledges that* " *belong to members, as ſuch, do belong to the children as well as to the* " *parents: But all Church-priviledges do not ſo. A member, as ſuch,* " (*or all members*) *may not partake of all priviledges, but they are to* " *make progreſs, both in memberly duties and priviledges, as their age,* " *and capacity, and qualifications do fit them for the ſame.*

Reply. The intendment of the Objection (as I apprehend) is to

 ſhew,

ſhew, that compleat and immediate Memberſhip, as ſuch, doth infer compleat and immediate communion in all Church-priviledges: But children in minority have not compleat and immediate communion in all Church-priviledges without ſome further act or qualification: Therefore ſuch children are not compleat and immediate Members, as ſuch. Now to this, their Anſwer is inſufficient: For, the beſt Members have need to make progreſs in memberly duties and qualifications, to fit them more and more for Church-priviledges. Yet all have that communion that ſuits their Memberſhip: *Infants*, in Baptiſm, the Watch, Prayers, and Bleſſing of the Church, by their Parents covenanting for them: *Adult perſons, orderly and regularly joyned by their perſonal covenanting for themſelves*, in the Seals, Voting, and Cenſures, which belong to them, as ſuch Members. Nor doth the Scripture any where allow the Church to admit any one by perſonal covenanting for themſelves and theirs, into any other Memberſhip then compleat and immediate. But Infants are not capable of ſuch Memberſhip, without ſome further perſonal act and qualification, when they ſhall become adult. Therefore their Infant-memberſhip is not compleat and immediate.

" 3. *That their Memberſhip ſtill continues in adult age, and ceaſeth* " *not with their Infancy, appears,* 1. *Becauſe in Scripture perſons are* " *broken off onely for notorious ſins, or incorrigible impenitency and* " *unbelief, not for growing up to adult age,* Rom. 11.20.

Reply. 1. When I affirm, that their mediate Memberſhip continueth during their minority, while they are under the Inſtitution and Government of Parents, *&c.* I deny that that Memberſhip continues in adult age, and when they are at their own diſpoſal, or have children of their own to covenant for: becauſe then the reaſon of their *mediate Memberſhip* ceaſeth, they being by age capable of covenanting for themſelves. 2. Their firſt Reaſon doth not prove, that the Memberſhip of all baptized in Infancy, continues in adult age: For the Text alledged ſpeaketh onely of ſuch as have been received into compleat and immediate memberſhip regularly, by their perſonal Faith and Covenanting with the Church viſibly, who are broken off, either by the juſt judgement of God, as the unbelieving Nation of the Jews are, or by the

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juſt Cenſure of the Church. Whereas our queſtion is, not of ſuch, but of adult perſons, that break off themſelves from the Covenant, by profaue neglect, or contempt of the Ordinances, or unſuitable Converſation. Who ever ſaid, that any were broken off for growing up to adult age? Such intimations ſhould be forborn by godly men.

" 2. *The Jews children circumciſed did not ceaſe to be members by* " *growing up, but continued in the Church, and were by virtue of their* " *memberſhip received in infancy, bound unto various duties, and in* " *ſpecial unto thoſe ſolemn profeſſions that pertained unto adult mem-* " *bers, not as then entring into a new memberſhip, but as making pro-* " *greſs in memberly duties,* Deut. 26. 2---10. & 16.16,17. with " Gal.5.3.

Reply. 1. That the Jews children circumciſed were bound to various duties, and to *thoſe ſolemn profeſſions that pertained to adult members*, when themſelves were grown up, is clear enough by the Texts alledged, and ſundry other. Whereunto I willingly adde, that *Baptiſm alſo bindeth the Infant-ſeed of Confederates to various Goſpel-duties, and eſpecially this, of uſing all means that Faith may be wrought in their hearts, unto obeying the Call of God, and then holding forth their Faith unto the Church, that they may take hold of the Covenant for themſelves and theirs, and ſo become compleat and immediate Members.* But 2. It is not proved, by thoſe Texts, that when they were adult, they did not enter into a new Memberſhip; rather the contrary appears in *Deut.*26.17,18. For, they entred into that Covenant perſonally and immediately, not in and by their Parents, as they did in Infancy, *Gen.*17.7. If covenanting be *the Form of Church-memberſhip*, (which they affirm) then a different form of covenanting, makes a different kinde of Church-memberſhip. *Immediate covenanting*, makes immediate Members; *Mediate covenanting*, makes mediate Members.

Their third Reaſon is, " *Thoſe relations of Born-ſervants and* " *Subjects, which the Scripture makes uſe of to ſet forth the ſtate of* " *children in the Church by,* Lev.25.41,42. Ezek.37.25. *do not (as* " *all men know) ceaſe with infancy, but continue in adult age. Whence* " *alſo it follows, that one ſpecial end of memberſhip received in infancy,* " *is to leave perſons under engagement, to ſervice and ſubjection to*

" *Christ in his Church, when grown up, when they are fit for it, and* " *have most need of it.*

Reply. 1. Those Relations of born Servants and Subjects in the Text alledged, have different respects. That *Lev.* 25. was typical, figuring the time of Grace, whereby now Christ hath freed us from the servitude of Sin and Satan, *Joh.* 8.32,36. *Rom.* 6.14,18. to become the Servants of God in Christ, *Rom.* 6.22. 1 *Cor.* 7.23. Parents and children, so far as they have interest in the Redemption wrought by Christ, as they are freed by him from *other Lord*, so they are bound thereby to *serve him all the dayes of their life*, Luke 1.74,75. Therefore this relation doth not cease with infancy, but continueth in adult age. But this doth nothing concern the thing in question, concerning *Mediate Membership*. The other Text, in *Ezek.* 37.25. is a Prophecy of the calling of the Elect Nation of the Jews, and of the state of the Church under the *New Jerusalem*; the difference between which, and the Christian Gentiles now, I have formerly shewn: so that neither doth that fit the question. But 2. I grant, (though not as following thence) *That one special end of membership received in infancy, is to leave persons under engagement, to service and subjection to Christ in his Church, when grown up, when they are fittest for it, and have most need of it.* The engagement is strong, both on the Parents, *To train up their children*, from their Infancy, *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, Eph.6.4. and upon the Children, *To know the God of their Parents, and to serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing minde*, 1 Chron.28.9. and upon the Church, *To exercise their Watchfulness, that both Parents and Children do their duty, helping them also therein with their Instructions, and Prayers, and Power, which is given for Edification, as the case may require.* Yet, when all this is done, neither can the Parents nor the Church give Grace unto the Children, that, when they become adult, they may be spiritually fit for personal and immediate Membership; and to bring them into it without such fitness visibly, is to profane the Ordinances, and to pollute the Lords Sanctuary.

" Reas. 4. *There is no ordinary way of cessation of membership, but by Death, Dismission, Excommunication, or Dissolution of the Society: none of which is the case of the persons in question.*

Reply.

Reply. This enumeration is insufficient; there is another ordinary way of cessation of Membership, *i. e. Desertion.* Thus *Esau's* Membership ceased, and so may the Membership of others, though they abide in the place where the Church is; yet, if being adult, they regard not to joyn with the Church by their personal and immediate Confederation, nor to fit themselves for it, these despise the Church of God. And, if that is sufficient to deprive those of all Church privledges who were before in personal and immediate Church fellowship when they forsake it. 1 *Joh.* 2. 19 much more those who never had such Membership, nor have approved their Spiritualness for it, to the Churches charitable judgement, nor truly desire and endavour so to do. What can the mediate Membership, which such had in Infancy, advantage them for continuing thereby still in Membership, when being adult, they live in the breach of that Covenant, whereby they were left under engagement in their Infancy unto service and subjection to Christ in the Church?

"Real. 5. *Either they are when adult, Members, or Non-*
"*members; if Non-members, then a person admitted a Member*
"*and sealed by Baptism, not cast out, nor deserving to be, may (the*
"*Church whereof he was, still remaining) become a Non-member, and*
"*out of the Church, and of the unclean world, which the Scripture*
"*acknowledgeth not.*

Reply. A Freemans childe (suppose of *London*, or any other Corporation) was free-born, and might, in his minority, trade under his father; yet, being grown up, he must personally enter into the common Engagement of Freemen, and be accepted of the Company, as his father was, unto all Duties and Liberties of that Society in his own person; else he may not trade for himself. If it be said, Why so? either he is a Freeman, or a Non-freeman. It will be readily answered, *He is a Non-freeman, and that by his own default.* If it be said, He was Free by his Fathers Copy, and is not dis-franchised by any publick Censure, nor hath deserved so to be; may such an one (the Society whereof he was, still remaining) become a Non-freeman, and out of that Society, &c? The answer will easily and readily be given, *He hath lost his Freedome, by not entring, in his own person, into the common*

Engagement of Freemen, to the Duties whereunto all Freemen are perſonally bound. So, and much more juſtly it is in this caſe. An adult perſon makes himſelf to become a Non-member, as to priviledges, by not performing the Duties whereunto he was bound by his Parents Covenant for him in his minority, and by his not regularly covenanting, as his Parents did. And this is according to Scripture, which tells us, that Circumciſion received in Baptiſm may become, by his own fault, being adult, no Circumciſion, *Rom.*2.25. Thoſe Texts in *Rom.*11.16. 1 *Cor.*7.14 *Gen.*17.7. are not applicable to the adult perſons in queſtion, but onely to Infants, and Children in minority.

" Propoſ. 6. *Such Church-members, who, either by death, or*
" *ſome other extraordinary Providence, have been inevitably*
" *hindred from publick acting, as aforeſaid, yet, having given*
" *the Church cauſe, in judgement of charity, to look at them*
" *as ſo qualified, and ſuch as had they been called thereunto,*
" *would ſo have acted, their children are to be baptized.*

Reply. This Propoſition may not be granted. For, 1. It granteth the priviledge of Church-memberſhip to ſuch as are *not actually and regularly Church-members*, which is contrary to Chriſts Ordinance, whereby Baptiſm, being a publick Church-Ordinance, is due onely to them who have a publick ſtate and Intereſt, ſuch are onely the Members of the publick Eccleſiaſtical Body, the Church. Hence 1. An ordinary Miniſter cannot orderly perform an act proper to his Office, in reference to Church-communion, to any that are not regularly and actually Members of the viſible Church, without great uſurpation: as, if a man do a work proper to Magiſtracy, to one that is not under his Magiſtratical Power, he is an Uſurper. So it is in this caſe of a Miniſter. To adminiſter Baptiſm, is an act of his Office-power: If he adminiſter Baptiſm to children, whoſe Parents are not regularly in Church-order; in ſo doing, why may not the Lord ſay, He is an Uſurper? Suppoſe an unbaptized perſon, profeſſing his Faith, and qualified according to the deſcription in the ſixth Propoſition; yet deferring, for ſome probable cauſes, to adjoyn himſelf to the Church, for the preſent, ſhould deſire Baptiſm of any of theſe Miniſters who framed this Propoſition; Should they adminiſter

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it to him, and ſo do a proper work of their Office upon him? If yea; if they admit him to Baptiſm, why not to the Lords Supper, and to the choice of Officers, and to the Cenſures of the Church, either actively or paſſively? for all theſe are Actions and Ordinances of one general nature: and it is meerly his want of Church-order that debars him from them. 2. The Church may not receive into any priviledge of Church-communion, ſuch as Baptiſm is, (whatever cauſe they ſeem to have, in the judgement of charity, to think them fit for Church-memberſhip, *and ſuch as had they been called, would have ſo acted*) until they be actually in publick Church-order; no more then the children of every good Subject of the King, may be admitted into the ſpecial Prerogatives of a Corporation, whereof themſelves, or their next Parents are not regularly free. *All things muſt be done in order*, 1 *Co*. 14. 40. whereunto, what is more contrary, then that he, who is not regularly and perſonally of a publick Society, ſhould have Fellowſhip in a publick Priviledge, proper to that Society? Yet they ſay *this*, which the Propoſition holds forth, *is manifeſt*:

" 1. *Becauſe the main foundation of the right of the childe to pri-*
" *viledge, remains*; viz. *Gods Inſtitution: and the force of his Co-*
" *venant carrying it to the generations of ſuch as are keepers of the*
" *Covenant*, i. e. *not viſible breakers of it*, &c.

Reply. The Parents of the children in queſtion are viſibly breakers of the Covenant, which was ſealed to them by Baptiſm, in their Infancy, and obliged them to ſervice and ſubjection to Chriſt in his viſible Church, having confederated perſonally and regularly for themſelves and theirs, as their Parents did before them. If they do not this, they are out of that order, by their own fault, wherein they might have given their children right to Baptiſm, according to Chriſts Inſtitution. That right which Parents have not for themſelves unto *Baptiſm* if they were unbaptized, they cannot give to their children. They who are not Members in their own perſonal and immediate right, cannot give a right of memberſhip to their children. And though their Memberſhip in Infancy was diſtinct from their Parents, yet being onely mediate, by their Parents covenanting for them, it ceaſeth, when they become adult, by their own fault, in that they were not orderly

derly joyned to the Church, immediately, by their perſonal covenanting for themſelves and theirs, regularly.

" 2. *Becauſe Parents not doing what is required in the fifth Pro-*
" *poſition, is through want of opportunity; which is not to be imputed*
" *as their guilt, ſo as to be a barre of the Childes priviledge.*

Reply. 1. It hath been already proved, in our examining the *fifth Propoſition*, that more is required to fit one that is adult, for Church-membership, then is there expreſſed, *viz. Faith in Chriſt made viſible to the Church*, without which they are not regularly Church-members. Now Baptiſm adminiſtred by ordinary Church-Officers, to ſuch as are out of Church-order, is profaned, as Circumciſion was by the *Shechemites*, and would have been by the *Iſhmaelites*, and *Edomites*, and the poſterity of *Abraham* by *Keturah*, if it had been adminiſtred to their children, when their Parents were not joyned to the Church of God, or abode not in it, in the Families of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*. For, 1. One end of Baptiſm now, (as it was of Circumciſion then) is to ſeal Church-communion, 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. it is a publick Teſtimony of the Admiſſion of the party baptized into the Family of God, *The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, into whoſe Name he is baptized, *Mat.* 28. 20. either immediately, if he be adult, by his perſonal Covenanting for himſelf and his ſeed; or mediately, if in his minority, by his next immediate Parents Covenanting for him. This the Parent in queſtion hath not done. Hence the want hereof is a bar to his childes Baptiſm. 2. The regular and lawful uſe of Baptiſm now (as of Circumciſion of old) preſuppoſeth both Gods Promiſe, and his Faith, who is to uſe it, either upon himſelf, or upon his Infant. Therefore he that preſumeth to uſe it, being not ſo qualified viſibly, (*viz.* not having before the Promiſe of Chriſt, and Faith for Juſtification with *Abraham*) doth he not treacherouſly uſurp the Great-Seal of the King of Heaven and Earth? If not, ſurely it had need to be ſoundly cleared.

" 3. *God reckoneth that as done in his ſervice, to which there*
" *was a manifeſt deſire and endeavour, albeit the acting of it be hin-*
" *dred*, &c

Reply. We muſt diſtinguiſh between private and publick Service in a publick ſtate and order. 1. In private Service, God accepts

accepts the will for the deed, when the acting of it is hindred, either by God himself, as *Abrahams* sacrificing his Son, and *Davids* building the Temple; or by the parties inability to do so much as he would, as in that case 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. and the like. 2. But in publick Service in a publick state and order, he doth not accept of that as done which is not done, so far as to bring them into that state and order, whatsoever their desires and endeavours have been; for this were to overthrow and subvert that Order, which God hath by his Institution established, and to bring in Confusion. Will God accept a man in doing acts of Office power proper to a Minister of a Church, because he desired and endeavoured to be a Minister, when he is not actually and regularly in Office? Or may a Church receive unto Fellowship of the outward Seals of the Covenant, such as are not actually and regularly joyned to the Church, because they desired and endeavoured to be of the Church, albeit their joyning with the Church was hindred? To be baptized, *in voto*, will nothing advantage any to Church-fellowship, though a Martyr, *in voto*, is accepted of God as a Martyr, because though God searcheth and knoweth the heart, yet the Church doth not: *De occultis non judicat Ecclesia*; secret things belong to God, but revealed things to men, and things are not manifested to the Church, otherwise then by congruous actings: nor, in this case, can they or theirs have a right to Church-priviledges, otherwise then by actual joyning with the Church.

" 4. *The terms of the Proposition import that in charity, that is* " *here done interpretatively, which is mentioned to be done in the fifth* " *Proposition expresly.*

Reply. 1. It's an unwarrantable charity that makes such an interpretation; for it is without warrant of any Rule in Scripture, or in good Reason. 2. If that which is mentioned to be done in the fifth Proposition expresly, is here done interpretatively, both being put together, will not avail to put the Parent regularly into Church-fellowship, in any sense, and to give his Infant a right to Baptism thereby. For, by Christs Ordinance, onely adult persons, who have true Faith in Him, and Holiness, are adult Members of the invisible Church, and the same persons, making holy Profession thereof outwardly in the order of him appointed,

may be Members of the visible Church; and they onely can give their Infant-seed a right unto Baptism. For, seeing *without faith it is impossible to please God*, in matters of his publick Worship and Service, whereof Baptism is one; and seeing God hath appointed us to Worship him, both in it, and in all other publick Duties and Services, so as we may please him therein: It followeth necessarily, that he requireth true visible Faith in all whom he priviledgeth to baptize their Infants, which yet is not expressly required in the fifth Proposition, nor interpretatively in this.

" Propos. 7. *The Members of Orthodox Churches, being found*
" *in the Faith, and not scandalous in life, and presenting due*
" *testimony thereof, these occasionally coming from one Church*
" *to another, may have their children baptized in the Church*
" *whither they come, by virtue of Communion of Churches:*
" *But if they remove their habitation, they ought orderly to Co-*
" *venant, and to submit themselves to the Government of Christ*
" *in the Church where they settle their abode, and so their chil-*
" *dren to be baptized: It being the Churches duty to receive such*
" *into communion, so far as they are regularly fit for the same.*

Reply. The regular Communion of approved Churches, I look at as the Ordinance of Christ, according to the 11th and 12th Positions premised: but this Proposition is so ambiguously expressed, that it leaves me in the dark, till some Questions be answered, that the extent and compass of the sense and meaning of it may be better cleared. They distribute it into two parts, which they endeavour to prove severally: but neither of them are sufficiently explained. In the first part, I Enquire; *What Churches they account Orthodox?* whether such onely as have the Truth of Doctrine, as it is opposed to Heterodoxies and Errours about the Doctrine of Faith, *viz.* Churches that are Heretical; or such also which are right in Judgement and Practice in matters of Church-Order. For both these the Church at *Colosse* was praised by *Paul*, in *Col.* 2,5,6. 2. *What course the Church, where the Members of such Churches desire to have their children baptized, do take to know that such Members are found in the Faith?* For a Member of an Orthodox Church may hold and maintain dangerous Errours, contrary to the Faith, 1 *Cor.* 15. 12. 3. *Whom*

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they account to be not ſcandalous in life? whether onely ſuch as fall not under the cenſure of Civil Courts, or alſo ſuch as are juſtly offenſive to Gods People by their ſinful and diſorderly walking? For they ſay, in their proof of the ſecond part of this Propoſition, that, *to adminiſter Baptiſm to ſuch as walk in diſorder, would be to adminiſter Chriſts Ordinance to ſuch as are in a way of ſin and diſorder, which ought not to be done,* 2 Theſſ. 3.6. 1 Chron 15.13. *and would be contrary to that Rule,* 1 Cor. 14.40. 4. *What they account due Teſtimony?* whether that which is given of them by the Church, from whence they come, or onely that which they may have from ſome in the place where they live, and have been but a little while, whether they be Members of the Church or not? 5. What they mean by their *occaſionally coming from one Church to another?* whether they take a due courſe to know that their occaſion of coming be approved by the Church whence they come, or not? 6. When they ſay, *They may have their children baptized in the Church whither they come, by virtue of the Communion of Churches?* Quære; 1. Whether they have Letters of Recommendation from the Church whence they come, whereby that Church deſireth this fruit of Communion with the Church where they would have their children baptized, or not? That being the orderly way of exerciſing Communion among Churches, *Rom.* 16. 1,2. 2 *Cor.* 3. 1. 3 *Joh.* ver. 9,12. and, Whether the Infant muſt be baptized as a Member (in and by his Parents covenanting for him) of that Church, whence his Parents come, or as a Member of the Church where he is baptized, and where the Parent is not a Member, but onely hath this benefit of the Communion of Churches, that himſelf is admitted to the Lords Supper, *pro tempore,* and his children to Baptiſm in a tranſient way? When theſe and the like Queſtions are Anſwered, I ſhall better know what to ſay to the firſt part of the Propoſition, then now I do. In the mean time, to the firſt Proof thereof I have already ſpoken in my Replies to *Propoſ.* 1. & 2. & 5. & 8.

2. To clear their meaning in the ſecond part of this Propoſition: *Quære;* 1. Whether ſuch Removers have an orderly diſmiſſion from the Church whence they come, or not? 2. Whether the Church where they ſettle their abode, do ſubject themſelves

ſelves to the Government of Chriſt, or not? 3. Whether all refuſing to Covenant with any Church whatſoever, where they are neceſſitated to ſettle their abode, is to be judged to be diſorderly walking, and to ſavour of Profaneneſs and Separation? 4. Whether if the Church in that place refuſe to receive them into communion, ſo far as they are regularly fit for the ſame, or if they do not joyn in communion with that Church in the place where they dwelt, it being not to be approved; Doth this their not being joyned, debar their children from being baptized in another Church that is approved? Theſe, and the like Queſtions, being clearly Anſwered, I ſhall underſtand the true and full ſenſe of this Propoſition, and what to ſay to it. So much may ſuffice, for the preſent, for Reply to their Anſwer to the firſt Queſtion.

" Queſt. II. *Whether according to the Word of God, there ought*
" *to be a Conſociation of Churches? and what ſhould be the*
" *manner of it?*

"Anſw. *The Anſwer may be given in the Propoſitions following.*

Reply. The Propoſitions following are eight. As for the firſt four: The firſt, Concerning *the full Power and Authority Eccleſiaſtical, within it ſelf, of each particular Congregation of viſible Saints, in Goſpel-Order, furniſhed, at leaſt, with a Teaching Elder, and walking together in Truth and Peace.* And the ſecond, concerning *The Siſterly Relation of the Churches of Chriſt each to other.* And the third, concerning *The Union and Communion of ſuch Churches.* And the fourth, concerning *The Acts of Communion*; I fully cloſe with, as well agreeing with the 11th and 12th Poſitions premiſed. Excepting onely the ſixth *Act of Communion*, and that, but in one part of it. For, *To admoniſh one another, when there is need and cauſe for it*, I confeſs is an Act of this Communion, and which may be proved from *Gal.*2. 11,24. by proportion. But, for that other part of it, *To withdraw from a Church, or peccant party therein, after due means, with patience uſed, obſtinately perſiſting in Errours or Scandals*; this muſt be taken with a grain of Salt. They referre us to the *Platform of Diſcipline*, (Chap. 15. Sect. 2. Partic. 3.) where they fetch a proof for this withdrawing, from

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Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17. by proportion. But there ſeems to be a *threefold disproportion* between that and this. For, 1. There the *Withdrawing* is a conſequent and effect of the Churches authoritative Cenſure of an obſtinate offender after the firſt, and ſecond, and third Admonition, the offender being a Member, and ſo under the Power and Authority of the Church, and to be ſo cenſured by the Church, to whom Chriſt hath given *the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven*, and hath ordained, that ſuch an one ſhall be Excommunicated for his obſtinacy in offences, which were materially of a leſſer kinde, but, by obſtinacy of the delinquent, (after ſecret, private, and publick Admonition) againſt the Ordinance of Chriſt for his reclaiming, becomes formally an heinous Scandal. But the *Withdrawing of other Churches from a Church which they account peccant*, is an act of different nature and kinde. For, it is not an act of publick Authority of ſuch Churches over that Church, by virtue of *the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven* given to any Synod, or Council of Neighbour-Churches, as they themſelves confeſs in their firſt Propoſition, for Anſwer to this ſecond Queſtion.

2. The ſteps, whereby they proceed to this *Withdrawing*, are, "1. *That one Church Admoniſh another.* 2. *If the Church under* "*offence, doth not hearken to that Admonition; the offended Church is* "*to acquaint other Neighbour-Churches with that offence, and with* "*their neglect of that Admonition: whereunto thoſe other Churches* "*are to joyn, in ſeconding the Admonition formerly given: and if* "*ſtill the offending Church continue in obſtinacy and impenitency, they* "*may forbear communion with them.*

Reply. This is not, by proportion, according to *Matth.* 18. For, there Chriſt doth not allow them, who have proceeded in Admoniſhing, but to the ſecond ſtep, to forbear communion with the delinquent: whereas theſe Neighbour-Churches are but in the ſecond ſtep. *Yet*, they ſay, *they may forbear communion with them.* Then they aſcend to the third ſtep; "*To proceed to make uſe of a* "*Synod, or Council of Neighbour-Churches walking orderly (if a* "*greater cannot conveniently be had) for their conviction. If they* "*hear not the Synod, the Synod, having declared them to be Obſtinate,* "*particular Churches, approving and accepting the judgement of the*

"*Synod, are to declare the ſentence of Non-communion reſpectively* "*concerning them; and thereupon, out of a Religious care to keep their* "*own communion pure, they may juſtly withdraw themſelves from* "*participation with them at the Lords Table, and from ſuch other acts* "*of holy communion, as the Communion of Churches doth otherwiſe* "*allow and require.* Thus they ſpeak, in that *Platform*. But, is this, in proportion, according to *Mat.*18. that *the Neighbour-Churches may firſt withdraw, and then a Synod or Council of Neighbour-Churches muſt be made uſe of for their conviction?* and, *if the Synod declare them to be Obſtinate, particular Churches are to declare the ſentence of Non-communion, and then to withdraw themſelves from all acts of holy communion?* Till they can produce a clear Rule for warrant of ſuch a proceeding, I cannot look at this otherwiſe, then as a meer humane Invention.

3. Though Churches may *withdraw from a Church that is obſtinate and impenitent* in ſome caſes, (without any ſuch *ſolemn ſentence of Non-communion declared by a Synod*) yet, not for ſuch cauſes as a delinquent Brother may be Excommunicated by a Church, according to *Mat.*18. For there, though the Offence was in ſome leſſer matter, and private between two at firſt; yet, by obſtinacy againſt convincing light, held forth in thoſe three ſteps of proceeding, it becomes a publick and heinous Scandal, and ſo the Delinquent muſt be at laſt Excommunicated by the command of Chriſt, and the Sentence of the Church, in obedience to Chriſt, who hath for ſuch ends *given the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven unto them.* But Neighbour-Churches may not withdraw from a true Church for every *Errour* and *Scandal*, though perſiſted in, and, in their opinion, obſtinately. For 1. It may be the *Errour* of Neighbour-Churches, to think that to be light from Scripture, which they hold forth for their conviction, when it is not from Scripture, rightly underſtood, and rightly applied If the Synod, by whom this Book is publiſhed, ſhould conclude any Church to walk in *Errour*, and *Scandal*, and *Obſtinately*, which ſhall not be convinced from what light they have here held forth, nor practiſe accordingly, till what is Replied *ad oppoſitum*, be ſoundly Refuted, and their Allegations and Applications of Scripture, more convincingly and irrefragably cleared, and *Withdraw*

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communion from them, after the first, second, and third Admonition; and, If any Neighbour-Churches, for this or the like cauſe, ſhould *Withdraw* from communion with them, after the Admonition of one Church, and, after that, of other Neighbour-Churches; They ſhould greatly ſin in ſo doing, and act contrary to their own Doctrine in their ſecond Proof of their 7th Propoſition for Anſwer to this ſecond Queſtion, *pag.* 28. where they ſay, *To refuſe communion with a true Church, in lawful and pious actions, is unlawful, and juſtly accounted Schiſmatical. For, if the Church be true, Chriſt holdeth ſome communion with it; therefore ſo muſt we.* Now the Churches in *New-England* were approved by their Neighbour-Churches to be true Churches, by their giving unto them the right hand of fellowſhip: and an Errour in leſſer matters, though perſiſted in againſt their Admonitions, (which may be from want of convincing light) doth not make any of them ceaſe to be a true Church. But to *Withdraw* themſelves from all holy communion with ſuch a Church for ſuch a cauſe, is *Total ſeparation from a true Church, which*, themſelves ſay, *is unlawful*, Ibid. 2. The caſes, wherein communion may be regularly *Withdrawn* from a Church or Perſon, are onely ſuch as Subvert the Fundamentals of Religion, and are obſtinately perſiſted in, againſt due means regularly uſed with patience for their conviction, being contrary to the *Faith once given to the Saints*; from whence they may be juſtly denominated *Heretical*, Tit. 3. 10, 11. 2 Joh. *ver.* 10, 11. Or to the *communion of Saints*; from whence they may be juſtly ſtyled *Schiſmatical*, Rom. 16. 17, 18. Or to both, *being fallen from the Truth once received*; from whence they be juſtly called *Apoſtatical*, 2 Tim 4. 10. Or, if there be any other caſe of like heinouſneſs. But in caſes of leſſer importance, Churches and Chriſtians are to be exhorted to *walk worthy of their calling, with all lowlineſs, and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love: Endevouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, &c *Eph.* 4. 1, 2, 3, *&c.* concluding with bleſſed *Paul*, that (the main things of Religion being provided for, and ſecured, for leſſer matters) *if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded; God ſhall reveal even this unto you*, Phil. 3. 15. For, in ſuch matters, godly men do frequently differ, and are not eaſily convinced; ſome from the

the ſtrength, others from the weakneſs of their Intellectuals: and the beſt know but in part.

I have been the larger in clearing this Point for neceſſary cauſes. Having thus ſpoken to the four firſt Propoſitions, I proceed to the fifth and ſixth Propoſitions.

"Propol. 5. *Conſociation of Churches, is their mutual and ſo-*
"*lemn Agreement to exerciſe communion in ſuch acts as aforeſaid, a-*
"*mong themſelves, with ſpecial reference to thoſe Churches, which by*
"*Providence are planted in a convenient vicinity, though with liberty*
"*reſerved, without offence, to make uſe of others, as the nature of the*
"*caſe, or the advantage of the opportunity, may lead thereunto.*

"Propol. 6. *The Churches of Chriſt in this Country, having ſo*
"*good opportunity for it, it is meet to be commended to them as their*
"*duty thus to conſociate: For, 1. Communion of Churches being*
"*commanded, and Conſociation being an Agreement to Practiſe it,*
"*this muſt needs be a Duty alſo,* Pſal. 119. 106. Neh. 10 28, 29.

Reply. Before I proceed to argue upon theſe Propoſitions, ſome things ſhould be premiſed, in way of Enquiry, that the terms may be rightly underſtood. *Quare.* Whether by mutual and ſolemn Agreement, they mean a Vow? It ſeems by the Texts alledged by them, in the firſt Proof of the ſixth Propoſition, that they mean ſo; and therefore I ſhall take it for granted that that is their meaning. 2. When they ſay, *This ſolemn Agreement or Covenant muſt be made with ſpecial reference to Churches in vicinity:* *Quare.* 1. How many Churches in Vicinity or Neighbour-Churches, muſt thus Covenant together? 2. Whether they muſt have ſet times of Meeting for this purpoſe? and who are to meet? Whether Elders alone? or others alſo ſent from the Churches with them? and how frequent theſe Meetings muſt be? and whether the ſet times muſt be kept conſtantly, though they have no preſent need of counſel from another? 3. Whereas they ſpeak of *Liberty reſerved, without offence, to make uſe of others, as the nature of the caſe,* &c. *may lead thereunto.* *Quare.* How they may avoid giving offence to Neighbour-Churches, if they uſe the help of Churches more remote? Whether they muſt have their conſent thereunto before they uſe them? 4. Concerning the end and iſſue of this Conſociation of Churches; Whether

ther they are bound thereby to acquieſce in the judgement and determinations of thoſe Neighbour-Churches, and to practiſe accordingly, whether they ſee convincing light in the Scriptures, or Arguments propounded to them, or not, under a Penalty of being judged by the reſt to be *Obſtinate in Error and Scandal*, and accordingly in time to have all *holy communion with them withdrawn from them?* It ſeemeth, by what was before ſaid in the ſixth *Act of Communion* for Anſwer to the firſt Queſtion, *pag.* 31. that this will be the end and iſſue of this Conſociation unto any Church that ſhall diſſent from the reſt. This Conſociation they endeavour to prove to be a duty incumbent upon the Churches in *New-England*. I ſhall briefly weigh their Reaſons.

" *For* 1. *Communion of Churches being commanded, and Conſo-*
" *ciation being but an Agreement to practiſe it, this muſt needs be a*
" *duty alſo*, Pſal. 119. 106. Nehem. 10. 28, 29.

Reply. It doth not neceſſarily follow, till they have proved that Conſociation of Churches by a mutual and ſolemn Covenant is commanded, as Communion of Churches is. Nor do the Texts alledged prove it in *Pſal.* 119. 106. *David* ſwore *to keep Gods righteous judgements*, and would *perform it*; becauſe, though he was not bound to ſwear, yet he had voluntarily ſworn it, and ſo was under a double bond to perform it: for, both his *keeping Gods righteous judgements*, and his *performing that Vow*, were commanded of God, *Deut.* 10. 13. with *Pſal.* 76. 11. 2. And his Vow was private, betwixt God and himſelf. Hence it will not follow, that Churches are bound to conſociate with a Vow or Covenant, after the manner here deſcribed, which is not proved to be a duty, and may be unſafe for particular Churches. That Covenant, in *Neh.* 10. 28, 29. was their Church-covenant renewed and explained, and ſo was a mutual ſolemn Engagement, by *entring into a Curſe, and into an Oath* (to which form we are not bound) and Church-covenanting is Gods Ordinance, *Iſa.* 19. 21. & 56. 4, to 8. & 62. 5. all which are Prophecies of the Churches under the Goſpel. But between the covenanting of a Church within it ſelf, and ſuch a covenanting as this for the conſociating of Churches, there are conſiderable differences. 1. *Becauſe this wants Warrant from the Scripture, which that hath*; *there being neither any Precept in Scri-*

ture commanding it, nor any Pattern among the Primitive Churches, planted or approved by the Apoſtles, commanding it unto us. 2. *Nor is there like Reaſon for ſuch Conſociation of Churches by a mutual and ſolemn Agreement or Covenant between Churches in a vicinity, as is for a Church-covenant within it ſelf.* For, the Church-covenant is neceſſary, becauſe, without it, the ends of Church-fellowſhip cannot be attained. For, 1. Each particular Church is a Spiritual Corporation; which therefore muſt receive its being from a Spiritual Combination, or Foederal Engagement. 2. By virtue hereof, they that had no natural impreſſion to ſubject them to others, or to give them power over them, have mutual power each over other, to command, & conſtrain, as the caſe requires; of which power they could not have been made partakers without mutual Agreement and Engagement. 3. Hereby they come to enjoy ſuch Spiritual and Eccleſiaſtick Priviledges, unto which none can be admitted without the approbation and allowance of the whole; which neceſſarily requires this Engagement to the whole, which is by Covenant. Thus Mr. *Hooker* argues, to prove *the neceſſity of a Church-covenant*, Survey, *part.* 1. *chap.* 4. *p.* 50, to 55. But the ends of *Church-communion*, (which is mutual helpfulneſs by counſel) may be attained (without ſuch a Conſociation by mutual Engagement) *by the Communion of Churches*, which of it ſelf, without any other Engagement, gives Churches a right and intereſt in another way mutually for their help by counſel, when their needs require it. The Churches in *New-England* have, by the bleſſing of Chriſt, found the benefit of the Communion of Churches for ſetling Truth and Peace among them, without ſuch a *Conſociation*, and may ſo ſtill. 3. Such an *Agreement between Churches* will become a Snare unto them, by ſtraitning them in the uſe and exerciſe of their Church-power within themſelves, *in re propria*. 1. If, by virtue hereof, they may not adminiſter Church-cenſures within themſelves, without concurrence of Neighbour-Churches, or Elders approbation ſought and attained thereunto before: Or, 2. If thereby they ſtand bound under the fore-noted Penalty, to reſt in, and practiſe according to the judgement and advice of ſuch Churches, having ſufficient light and conſent within themſelves without them. 3. Mr. *Rutherfurd* affirms, *That a conve-*

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nient number of Churches, having ordinarily converſing one with another, ſhall voluntarily combine themſelves in one Society; this laſt gives in the formality of Claſſical Memberſhip, Lib. 2. p. 320. He addes: *When God hath made him a combined Member, now, by inſtitution, of one Presbyterian Church, not of another, though by ordinary converſe with other Churches, in caſe of ſcandal, his example may prove prejudicial and infeſtuous to others, yet this Presbytery muſt proceed to Excommunication againſt him, becauſe he is combined with them.* Thus, you ſee, by this voluntary combination of Churches, a Church become a Claſſical or Presbyterian Church, and the Members, by conſenting thereunto, become Members of a Claſſical Church, and under the power of it, ſo as to be Excommunicated by it. And is not this Conſociation to be looked at as a Snare to the Churches? which 1. Transforms them from Congregational Churches into a Claſſical Church? And 2. Subjects them under the Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction of that Claſſical Church? And 3. Without any warrant of Chriſts Inſtitution? Let us ſee if there be more in their ſecond Proof.

"2. Paul *an Apoſtle ſought with much labour the conference,* "*concurrence, and right hand of fellowſhip of other Apoſtles: and* "*ordinary Elders and Churches have not leſs need each of other, to pre-*"*vent their* running in vain, *Gal.* 2. 2,6,9.

Reply. 1. This neceſſity was proper to *Paul*'s caſe, who did not converſe with Chriſt on earth, as the other Apoſtles did, but was as one *born out of due time,* 1 Cor. 15. 8. and ſo was more liable to be objected and excepted againſt, then the other Apoſtles; and therefore had more need to be countenanced among men, by them, then they by him: Whence he wiſely ſought approbation from them. But this is not the caſe of the Churches in *New-England,* each of them having been approved by *the right hand of fellowſhip* given to them by other Churches at their firſt gathering, and at the Ordination of their Teaching and Ruling-Elders. 2. *Paul* did thus, not by reaſon of ſuch a conſociation of Churches, as is here deſcribed, but for other Reaſons. 3. The *running in vain* of any Elders and Churches, hath been hitherto prevented by *the communion of Churches* regularly exerciſed, and ſtill may be.

" 3. *Thoſe general Rules, touching the need and uſe of counſel and* " *help in weighty caſes, concern all Societies and Polities Eccleſiaſtical,* " *as wellas Civil,* Prov. 11.14. & 15.22, &c.

Reply. It is true, and it is their duty to make uſe of them, in obedience, and with thankfulneſs to God, as need requires, when they want light or conſent within themſelves, by virtue of the *communion of Churches*, without ſuch a Conſociation as they deſcribe.

" 4. *The pattern, in* Acts 15. *holds forth a warrant for Coun-* " *cils, which may be greater or leſſer, as the matter ſhall require.*

Reply. But, 1. Not with ſpecial reſpect to the vicinity of Churches: for *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and the Meſſengers from the Church of *Antioch*, paſſed through other Churches nearer, to go to *Jeruſalem* for counſel. 2. Nor by virtue of ſuch a Conſociation of the Church at *Antioch* with that at *Jeruſalem*, but of the communion of Churches.

" 5. *Concurrence and communion of Churches, in Goſpel-times,* " *is not obſcurely held forth in* Iſa. 19 23,24,25. Zeph. 3.9. 1 Cor. " 11.16. & 14.32,36.

Reply. Some of thoſe Texts note onely a communion of Saints in one and the ſame Church. 2. None of them hold forth a Conſociation of Churches as they deſcribe.

" 6. *There hath conſtantly been in theſe Churches a profeſſion of* " *Communion, in giving the right hand of fellowſhip at the gathering* " *of Churches, and Ordination of Elders; which importeth a Con-* " *ſociation, and obligeth to the practice thereof.*

Reply. Together with the *profeſſion of communion*, hath been the practice of it in theſe Churches. But that this communion importeth ſuch a Conſociation, as they deſcribe, and obligation to the practice thereof, was not expreſſed, nor underſtood. Worthy Mr. *Cotton*, (whoſe Name ought to be honourable among the Saints, both in *Old England* and *New*) in that Book which he entituled, *The Way of the Churches in New-England*, the ſixth Chapter, ſpeaketh of the Communion of Churches, and ſheweth ſeven wayes, whereby it ought to be, and is, in theſe Churches, exerciſed. They do (as I apprehend) teach all the Duties to be performed, by virtue of Church-communion, mutually, by each other: But of this Conſociation (as it is here deſcribed)

deſcribed) he ſpeaketh not a word; not, I believe, did apprehend any Neceſſity of it, or Rule in Scripture for it. Therefore, when they ſay; *Without this, we ſhall want an expedient and ſufficient cure for emergent Church-difficulties and differences*; the conſtant experience of theſe Churches, from their beginning, to this day, evinceth the contrary. And though *our Way is charged with the want hereof*; yet *it is unjuſtly*, and by ſuch as would bring us into their Way of Claſſical Churches, which is not proved to be the Ordinance of Chriſt, as this of the *Communion of Churches* is, and hath been found effectual, by the bleſſing of Chriſt, and ſo will be ſtill. And though *this part of the Doctrine of the Church*, as they call it, concerning ſuch a conſociation, it being not proved to be the Doctrine of Chriſt, was never practiſed in theſe Churches: For without it, the Churches either have been, or might have been, and may be hereafter, kept in purity and peace with Brotherly love among themſelves mutually, by the regular improving the communion of Churches, which is manifeſted to be the Ordinance of Chriſt, who hath given us perfect Rules in the New Teſtament, for the ordering of the communion of Chriſtian Churches, which are ſufficient for attainment of the ends, for which Chriſt hath appointed it, according to the ſecond, third, fourth, eleventh, and twelfth Poſitions premiſed. With which, if this way of Conſociation of Churches ſhall be clearly proved to agree (which I do not finde to be yet done) I ſhall readily and heartily cloſe with it, and ſubmit unto it. For it is onely the Truth that I ſearch for, and deſire to bear witneſs unto, that, when my time ſhall come to *lay down this earthly tabernacle* (which I expect daily) *I may give up my account with joy*. 2. And, if any Church be refractory, we have the help of the Civil Power, which is ordained of God for the juſt *puniſhment of thoſe that do evil*, whether in Church or Common-wealth, *Rom.* 13. Every Ordinance of God hath Gods bleſſing annexed; which we cannot expect in this way, till it be proved to be Gods Ordinance, which yet is not done.

" Propoſ. 7. *The manner of the Churches agreement herein,* " *may be by the Churches open conſenting unto the things here declared,* " *in Anſwer to this ſecond Queſtion; as alſo to what is ſaid there-*

" *about, in Chap.* 15, 16. *of the* Platform of Diſcipline, *with reſe-*
" *rence to what is before expreſſed in Propoſition* 5th.

Reply. If the Churches do expreſs their Agreement herein openly, they do voluntarily engage themſelves, and covenant to practiſe according to the things declared, not onely in the point of Church-communion, but alſo of ſuch conſociation as is here expreſſed, which they have need to ſee to be warranted by the Word, if they will act accordingly in faith, knowing that *whatſoever is not of faith, is ſin*, Rom. 14, 23. What is ſaid in the *Platform, chap.* 15 hath been, in part, examined before in *chap.* 16. 5.

" They ſay, *The Synods Directions and Determinations, ſo farre*
" *as conſonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence*
" *and ſubmiſſion, not onely for their agreement therewith,* &c. *but*
" *alſo ſecondarily, for the power whereby they are made,* &c.

Reply. I grant, that the *Synods Directions and Determinations, ſo farre as conſonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and ſubmiſſion.* But what if the Members of Churches, to which they are ſent, do not finde them conſonant to the Word rightly underſtood and applied? Are they nevertheleſs ſtill bound to practiſe according to *the Synods Directions and Determinations*, becauſe the Synod coucludeth that they are *conſonant to the Word?* I ſuppoſe, no Orthodox Synod, in theſe times, will arrogate to it ſelf ſuch infallible Aſſiſtance, as *the Apoſtles, being aſſembled with the Church at Jeruſalem*, had, *Acts* 15. (though they argued and concluded onely from Scripture, yet that Council could not erre in their underſtanding and applying Scripture, having ſuch guides as the Apoſtles were) but will confeſs that they may erre in their underſtanding and applying the Scriptures, whereupon they ſeem to ground their *Directions and Determinations.* And if ſo, it is the duty of every Church, and the Members thereof, to examine by the Scriptures whatſoever *Direction or Determination* is propounded by the Synod. If they finde that they are *conſonant to the Word of God*, they are bound by Gods Authority to receive them *with reverence and ſubmiſſion.* If otherwiſe, *we ought to obey God, rather then man*, Acts 5. 29. 2. This power of the Synod (though they ſay it is *but ſecondary*, and that it is for their agreement with the Word, which is the principal ground thereof, and

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without which their Directions and Determinations binde not at all, yet) they make so binding, that, if any Churches shall refuse to practise according to the Directions and Determinations of the Synod, (though they have strong grounds of dis-satisfaction about the Synods interpretation and application of the Scriptures alledged by them) they will *withdraw themselves from communion with them.* Whether such an authoritative urging their counsels upon Churches be warranted by Scripture, let the Reader enquire and consider: and, Whether it will agree with what themselves before declared, concerning *the unlawfulnesse of totall Separation from a true Church:* and, Whether there be need of it *to cure emergent Church-difficulties and differences*; seeing all that are godly will readily close with such Directions and Determinations of Synods, as are clearly consonant to the Word of God: and, if any obstinately will persist in their own wayes, contrary to the Word held forth to them by the Synod, the Civil Power is Gods Ordinance for *punishment of* such *evil doers*, that the Churches may be kept pure and peaceable, in the exercise of Church-communion among themselves in a Brotherly way. Which yet is no impediment to the Churches (and that by the declaratory Sentence of a Synod, that is, after due conviction of a Church that is *Heretical, Schismatical, Apostatical*, or the like, with *due patience exercised*) to *withdraw the right hand of fellowship* from such as make themselves worthy, by their obstinacy against the light clearly held forth from Scripture, to be *rejected*, as not true Churches of Christ. Yet this they may not regularly do, meerly for their Dissenting from the Determinations of the Synod, upon conscientious grounds, and in lesser matters. What is before expressed in the fifth Proposition, hath been already examined.

"Propos. 8. concerneth *The manner of exercising and practising* "*that Communion, which this consent and agreement specially tendeth* "*unto, which*, they say, *may be, by making use occasionally of Elders,* "*or able Brethren of other Churches; or by the more solemn Meet-* "*ings of both Elders and Messengers, in lesser or greater Councils,* "*as the matter shall require.* Such Meetings, for the end specified, being rightly ordered, and carried on in a Brotherly way, by men sincerely affected to establish Truth with Peace in the Churches

Churches of the Saints, according to the Rules given unto us by Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord and Law-giver, I do fully approve, as of profitable uſe, by the Bleſſing of Chriſt, for the good of the Churches.

The Reverend Author's *POSTSCRIPT.*

Chriſtian Reader,

THeſe Lines and Labours of Love (I truſt) to the King of Saints, *and his* Subjects and Laws, *I leave with thee, with the wiſe peruſall and conſideration of them. The iſſue and ſucceſs, I commit unto the onely wiſe God, and our Father in Jeſus Chriſt, deſiring all thoſe into whoſe hands it may come, to receive nothing ſaid by me, further then they ſhall finde it conſonant to the Word of God in the Scripture, ſpecially of the New Teſtament: And that, if they diſſent in any particulars, they will gratifie me with notice thereof, together with their Reaſons; whom they ſhall finde thankful for ſuch help, and ready to embrace any Truth that is yet hidden from me; and that no man will ſuſpect that I ſeek any thing in this* Eſſay, *but Truth with Peace, leſt they become judges of evil thoughts. Farewell in our Lord Jeſus, who is the Truth. Let his good Spirit lead us, and all his Churches and People, into wayes of Truth and Peace, and eſtabliſh our goings in thoſe wayes.* Amen.

Your aſſured Friend and Brother,

J. D.

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CONSIDERATIONS

UPON

THE SEVEN PROPOSITIONS

Concluded by the SYNOD ſitting at *BOSTON*, *June* 10th. 1662.

By the Reverend, Mr. NICHOLAS STREET, Teacher of the Church of Chriſt at *New-haven*.

I. THis Phraſe, *Members of the viſible Church*, in the firſt Propoſition, I take to be explained in the ſecond Propoſition.

II. By this Phraſe in the ſecond Propoſition, *Their Infant-ſeed*, I ſuppoſe is meant onely their legitimate infant-ſeed, and is not to be extended to illegitimate children; againſt which a ſtrong Argument may be gathered from *Deut.* 23. 2.

III. The ſecond Propoſition doth ſeem to diſtinguiſh of Members in particular Churches: Some are ſaid to be *Confederate viſible Believers*; whereby, I ſuppoſe, is meant, ſuch as have immediately and perſonally taken hold of the Covenant themſelves, both for themſelves, and for their ſeed: for it is manifeſt, that it is ſpoken of ſuch as are made contradiſtinct to an infant-ſeed, that cannot thus do. Some are ſaid to be *Their infant-ſeed*, (i.) *children in minority* &c. And how come theſe to be Members? The laſt words in the Propoſition do ſhew; which are, *Whoſe next Parents, one or both, are in Covenant*; which doth imply at leaſt, that they become Members in and by their next Parents covenanting for them. Hence the ground of the diſtinction of Membership into *Immediate*

and *Mediate* is very clear. The Argument may be thus framed: Such as is the *ratio formalis* of the Membership, such is the Membership, so may it be diſtinguiſhed and denominated. But Confederation, which is the *ratio formalis* of the Membership, is immediate in the Parent, in the Childe mediate. *Ergo*.

A difference in Membership is granted, both in this ſecond Propoſition, and ſome others after; and if this diſtinction to expreſs the difference be not proper, let ſome better be laid down, that doth more aptly and fully ſuit the nature of the thing, and we ſhall receive it. In the mean time we ſhall hold to this, as conceiving, that the admitting of it would be a good meanes to preſerve the Churches in purity, to prevent many unprofitable and uncomfortable diſputes, and other great inconveniences, which, the rejecting of it will unavoidably make way unto.

IV. This clauſe in the third Propoſition, *When grown up, are perſonally under the Watch, Diſcipline, and Government of the Church*; had need be warily underſtood, and doth call for ſome clear explication. For, if it be meant that they are in the ſame way, and as fully under the *Diſcipline and Government of the Church*, as thoſe who in their own perſons have taken hold of the Covenant, it cannot be aſſented unto: For then, in caſe of ſuch delinquency, as doth call for Excommunication in another Member, they are formally to be Excommunicated. But this may not be admitted. For,

1. Formal Excommunication doth not ſuit their ſtate; they are within the Church onely *mediately*, by their Parents confederation: Therefore are not to be caſt out of the Church *immediately and perſonally* by formal Excommunication. 2. Beſides, they are, in reſpect of ſtrength, *weak*; and in reſpect of ſtate, *dead*: eſpecially being conſidered as in this third Propoſition, *without qualification*, even ſuch as are mentioned in the fifth Propoſition, which yet are *ſeparable from true and ſaving grace*. They are too weak to bear the weight and ſtrength of that Cenſure, which is *mighty through God*, 2 Cor. 10. 4. it is to *put new wine into old bottles*, which Chriſt doth diſlike in Spiritual matters, *Mat.* 9.

2. It ſeemeth to be very injurious to them, to lay them open to the higheſt Cenſure, and not to allow them proportionable priviledges.

3. The

3. The main end of Excommunication, when it paſſeth upon ſuch, is not like to be attained, which is, *the deſtruction of the fleſh, that the ſpirit may be ſaved*, 1 Cor. 5. 5. The Ordinance doth ſuppoſe the Subject of it to be *fleſh and ſpirit*; they who are conſidered as without qualifications to make them capable of Church-priviledges, as in this third Propoſition, cannot be looked at as other then *all fleſh*.

V. In the fourth Propoſition it is ſaid, *Theſe adult perſons are not therefore to be admitted to full Communion, becauſe they are and continue Members, without ſuch further qualifications as the Word of God requireth thereunto.* But whether the children of ſuch are to be baptized, or not, is not ſaid; and it is neceſſary that it ſhould have been expreſſed, that the ſenſe and meaning of the Synod might be rightly underſtood.

VI. To the fifth Propoſition many things may be ſaid.

1. This Propoſition may rationally be looked at, as holding forth the qualifications wanting to full Communion, mentioned in the fourth Propoſition: And if ſo, then it will follow, that ſuch as have theſe qualifications, have right to full Communion: if I miſs it, I would be thankful to him that ſhould ſhew me my miſtake; if I am right, and do rightly expreſs the ſenſe of that Propoſition, it were expedient that the Synod ſhould plainly and fully expreſs their meaning therein, to the underſtanding of all.

2. The qualifications are, *Underſtanding the Doctrine of Faith, and profeſſing their Aſſent thereunto; Not ſcandalous in life.*

1. There is more required in a Church-member, even in point of knowledge, then to *underſtand the Doctrine of Faith, and aſſent thereunto.* He ought, in a competent meaſure, to *underſtand Church-Order and Diſcipline appointed by Chriſt*, otherwiſe he cannot Covenant in judgement, or own the Covenant; neither doth he *know how to behave himſelf in the Houſe of God*, as a Member thereof.

2. The Devil doth *underſtand the Doctrine of Faith*, and doth *aſſent thereunto*, Jam. 2. 19.

3. *Not ſcandalous in life*, is wholly Negative, and may be ſaid of irrational Animals. *He* onely *that doth righteouſneſs*, poſitively, can be denominated *righteous*, 1 Joh. 3. 7.

4. Beſides all theſe, there muſt be *the work and grace of Faith* held forth, *Acts* 8. 37, 38. & 16. 31---34. before any medling with the Covenant, *Iſa.* 19.21.

3. It is ſaid, *And ſolemnly owning the Covenant*, &c. The Scripture ſpeaketh of *Entring into a Covenant*, 2 Chron. 15.12. of *Making a Covenant with the Lord*, 2 Chron. 29.10. and, *Before the Lord*, 2 Chron. 34.31. of *Taking hold of the Covenant*, *Iſa.* 56 4. Now if their *Owning the Covenant* be the ſame; then, not onely their children are to be baptized, but themſelves admitted to full Communion; if ſhort, then it is a meer humane invention, not warranted by the Word.

4. Upon ſuppoſition, that the qualifications expreſſed be found in them, it is ſaid, *Their children are to be baptized.* But

1. The firſt and ſecond Propoſitions are againſt it. The firſt Propoſition doth limit Baptiſm to *the Members of the viſible Church*: The ſecond Propoſition doth explain who are meant by *Members of the viſible Church according to Scripture*; 1. *Confederate viſible Believers in particular Churches*, (i.) ſuch as have perſonally and immediately Confederated for themſelves, as the laſt clauſe ſheweth. And 2. *Their Infant-ſeed*, (i.) *children in minority, whoſe next Parents, one or both, are in Covenant.* Now theſe mentioned in the fifth Propoſition, to whom Baptiſm is allowed, are neither the one nor the other. *Ergo.*

2. The *grace of Faith is wanting*, if there be no more then the qualifications before mentioned, and that is neceſſary to give their children right to Baptiſm, *Acts* 2.38,39.

3. *The children of ſuch are not to be baptized, who themſelves do live under great offence viſibly, and do not reform*, Exod. 20.5.

But ſo do theſe Parents, in not taking hold of the Covenant perſonally and immediately, for themſelves. Ergo.

It may eaſily and abundantly be proved, that ſuch as have been baptized in the Church, and have lived under precious means and great light, untill they are Married, and have children, and all this while have neglected the main thing that doth concern them, which is *to Believe*, and upon their Believing, *perſonally*, and for themſelves, to *take hold of the Covenant*, are under very great ſin and offence. But I willonely uſe one Argument, which is this:

Neglect

Neglect of taking hold of the Covenant, or of entring into Covenant now under Chriſt and the Goſpel, is as groſs a neglect, as great a ſin, as much diſpleaſing to God, as was the neglect of Circumciſion, the ſign of the Covenant before Chriſt. Grounds of it are:

1. The thing it ſelf is as weighty, that I ſay not, more.

2. As fully under command as that, 1 *Joh.* 3.23. *Rom.* 10.9,10.

3. The neglect of it doth as neceſſarily and peremptorily infer Gods higheſt diſpleaſure, and everlaſting deſtruction, if continued in, as that, *Joh.* 3.36. *Mark* 16.16. *Heb.* 2.3.

But that neglect was groſs, the ſin great, and very diſpleaſing to God, *Gen.* 17.14. *Exod.* 4.24---26. Ergo.

4. If the children of ſuch are to be baptized; if their children again thus baptized, live to have children, themſelves not *perſonally taking hold of the Covenant*, or not *entring into Covenant*, what ſhall become of them? ſhall they be baptized, or not?

1. *If not*; it is needful that it ſhould be declared, that all may know where to ſtop, and to underſtand, that this Priviledge is not to exceed the *Third Generation*. Again, *if not*, it is ſtrange that a childe ſhould be begotten or born of a Member, and yet it ſelf be no Member; or, if a Member, have no right to Baptiſm.

2. *If ſo*; it may be demanded, *By what right?* or, *Where is the ground of their right to Baptiſm? Not in the Grandfather, or Great-Grandfather*; that is generally diſliked: and the ſecond Propoſition doth limit it otherwiſe; but in *the immediate Parent*, I ſuppoſe. But, *how is the right of theſe childrens Baptiſm founded upon him?* Not upon *his perſonal Confederating*; for it is ſuppoſed there is none: Nor upon *his owning the Covenant of his father*; for his father made no Covenant: he did onely *own the Covenant of his Parents*, and that gave the right of Baptiſm to his children, as is held forth in the fifth Propoſition. It remaineth therefore, that this Parent of the *third Generation* doth own what his Parent of the *ſecond Generation* (he can go no higher) hath done, and *what is that?* He *entred not into Covenant*, but onely *owned the Covenant that his father entred into.* And thus theſe laſt children, who are of the *fourth Generation*, do come to have right to Baptiſm, not by *their Parents Confederation*, as the *ſecond ſort* mentioned in the ſecond Propoſition; nor by *their Parents owning*

their fathers Covenant, as the *third ſort* ſpoken of in the fifth Propoſition; but *by theſe Parents* (of the *third Generation*) *owning their Parents* (of the *ſecond Generation*) *owning the Covenant of their fathers*, of the *firſt*. This ſeemeth to be an uncouth way, and very unpleaſant Divinity.

VII. The ſixth Propoſition I look at as an *Exception* to the fifth; otherwiſe it is croſs unto it, and againſt it. To this I ſay,

1. If there be any weight in the Arguments uſed under the *ſixth Conſideration*, againſt the baptizing of children, to whom the fifth Propoſition doth allow Baptiſm; then they are likewiſe of force againſt the baptizing of children mentioned in this ſixth Propoſition.

2. I cannot but take notice of the ſeveral ſorts of Memberſhip, all giving right to Baptiſm: *Two* in the ſecond Propoſition, a *Third* in the fifth; a *Fourth* in the ſixth: and if Memberſhip, *without perſonal Confederation by the ſeed of Confederate viſible Believers*, doth not end in the *third Generation*, then there is a *Fifth*, and a *Sixth ſort of Memberſhip*; and all theſe are differing one from the other. The two firſt are of God, and according to his Word, the reſt are not.

VIII. The laſt Propoſition ſeemeth to open a very wide gate in the Church, wider then God doth allow, *Iſa.* 26. 2. for though it requireth qualifications in ſuch Members who claim right to Baptiſm for their children in other Churches, by virtue of *Church-communion*, yet it is altogether ſilent of the qualifications of ſuch Churches themſelves, onely they muſt be *Orthodox*; that reſpects the *Doctrine of Faith* alone. There is much more to be attended: A Church may be *Orthodox in matters of Faith*, yet *Scandalous in Practice*: A whole Church may be *under Scandal*, as well as a particular perſon; and in that caſe another Church may *withdraw from it*, and have no communion either with it, or its Members. And this was, not long ſince, the Judgement and Practice of ſome of the chief Churches and Elders in the *Bay*.

Again, a Church may believe the main *Articles of Faith*, yet be ſo *defective in Diſcipline*, yea, ſo *oppoſite to Chriſts Government*, as to lay aſide his *Laws and Inſtitutions*, and ſet up the *Inventions and Traditions of men*: And likewiſe may have ſuch a *corrupt Conſti-*

tution,

tution, both in regard of *Matter*, *Open ſcandalous livers*; and likewiſe of *Form*, *No viſible expreſs Covenant according to the Rules of the Goſpel*, that there can be no ſuch communion held and maintained with ſuch a Church, or her Members holding communion with it, as is expreſſed in this ſeventh Propoſition, without manifeſt diſobedience to the Word of God, in theſe, and many other places, *Rev.* 18.4. 2 *Cor.* 6.17. *Eph.* 5.11.

If the Members of Orthodox Churches may, upon the terms expreſſed in the ſeventh Propoſition, claim Baptiſm for their children in our Churches, by virtue of *Church-communion*, then themſelves have right to communicate with us in the Lords Supper; and then what ſhould hinder but that we may, by virtue of *Church-communion*, occaſionally coming to any of theſe Orthodox Churches, have our children baptized in ſuch a Church, and our ſelves partake in the Supper of the Lord? Or, if we ſhould have occaſion to remove our Habitation to ſuch a place where ſuch an Orthodox Church is, why may we not joyn unto it, and have fellowſhip with it? And if we may ſo do, *New-England* Chriſtians are of all Chriſtians in the world *moſt miſerable* and fooliſh. We have *ſuffered many things in vain*, in leaving ſuch a Countrey for this; our Eſtates, Friends, Comforts there, to enjoy God, and Chriſt, and our Conſciences in the *Congregational-Way*, in a low afflicted condition in the Wilderneſs, for ſo many years together; and now we muſt loſe thoſe things which we have wrought, and may return to our former ſtate when we pleaſe: which the Lord preſerve us from.

F I N I S.

THere is now in the Preſs a ſmall Treatiſe, Entituled, *A Diſcourſe of the Laſt Judgement*, on Matth. 25. 31. *to the end*, &c. By Mr. *SAMUEL WHITING*, Paſtor of the Church of Chriſt at *Lynne*; which will ſhortly be extant.

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